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# RIVERSIDE LITERATURE SERIES

## SNOW-BOUND AMONG THE HILLS SONGS OF LABOR

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

J. G. WHITTIER

WITH NOTES



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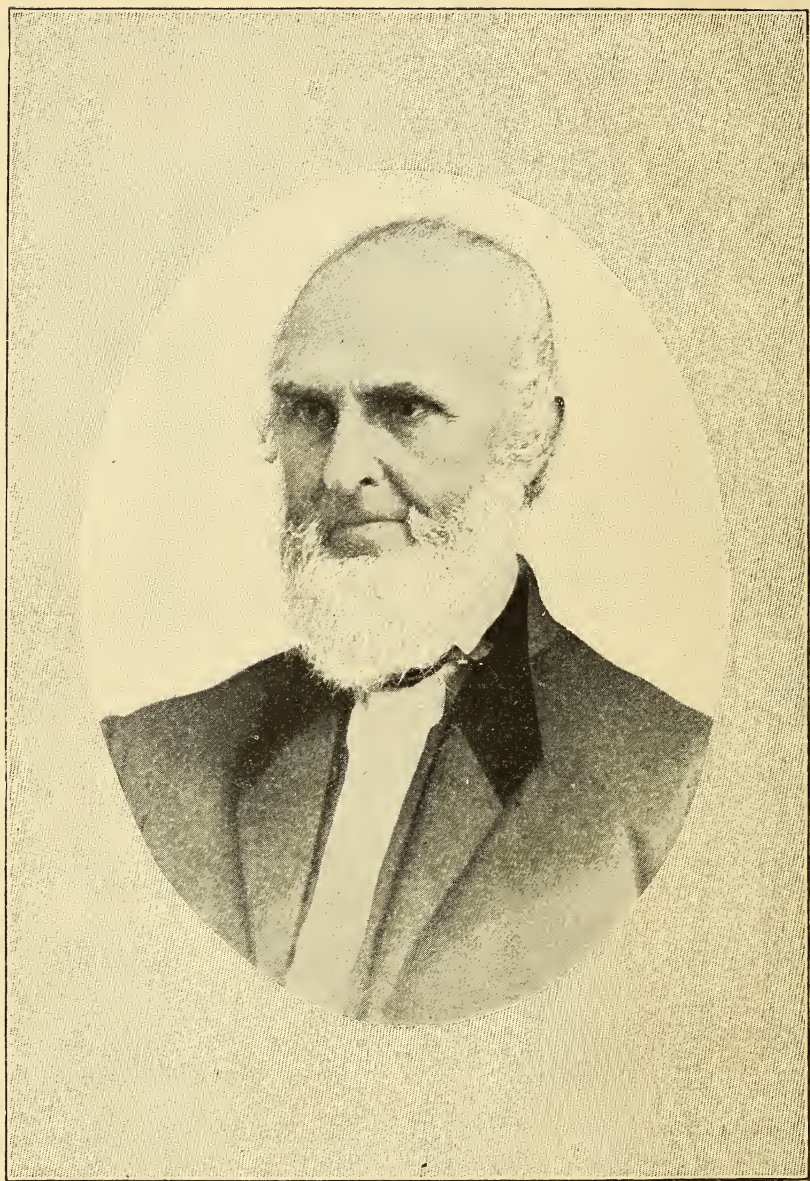
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John George Hutton

SNOW-BOUND: AMONG THE HILLS  
SONGS OF LABOR: AND  
OTHER POEMS

BY

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

WITH BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH AND  
EXPLANATORY NOTES

*by*  
*Horace Eliza Scudder*



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MAP OF THE REGION CELEBRATED IN WHITTIER'S POEMS

## A SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF JOHN GREEN- LEAF WHITTIER.

### I.

THE house is still standing in East Haverhill, Massachusetts, where Whittier was born, December 17, 1807. It was built near the close of the seventeenth century by an ancestor of the poet, it sheltered several generations of Whittiers, in it John Greenleaf Whittier lived till his thirtieth year, and it is likely to enjoy a long lease of life in association with his name, for after his death it was purchased to be held in trust as a shrine, and its chief room has been restored to the condition in which it was when the boy was living in it, the recollection of whose experience inspired that idyl of New England life, "Snow-Bound."

It is to "Snow-Bound" that one resorts for the most natural and delightful narrative of the associations amongst which Whittier passed his boyhood. His family held to the tenets of the Friends, and the discipline of that society, in connection with the somewhat rigorous exactions of country life in New England in the early part of the century, determined the character of the formal education which he received. In later life he was wont to refer to the journals of Friends which he found in the scanty library in his father's house as forming a large part of his reading in boyhood. He steeped his mind with their thoughts and learned to love their authors for their unconscious saintliness. There were not more than thirty volumes on the shelves, and, with a passion for reading, he read them over and over. One of these books, however, was the Bible, and he possessed himself of its contents, becoming not only familiar with the text, but penetrated by the spirit.

Of regular schooling he had what the neighborhood could give, a few weeks each winter in the district school, and, when he was nineteen, a little more than a year in an academy just started in Haverhill. In "Snow-Bound" he has drawn the portrait of one of his teachers at the district school, and his poem "To My Old Schoolmaster" commemorates another, Joshua Coffin, with whom he preserved a strong friendship in his manhood, when they were engaged in the same great cause of the abolition of human slavery. These teachers, who, according to the old New England custom, lived in turn with the families of their pupils, brought into the Whittier household other reading than strictly religious books, and Coffin especially rendered the boy a great service in introducing him to a knowledge of Burns, whose poems he read aloud once as the family sat by the fireside in the evening. The boy of fourteen was entranced; it was the voice of poetry speaking directly to the ear of poetry, and the newcomer recognized in an instant the prophet whose mantle he was to wear. Coffin was struck with the effect on his listener, and left the book with him. In one of his best known poems, written a generation later, on receiving a sprig of heather in bloom, Whittier records his indebtedness to Burns. To use his own expression, "the older poet woke the younger."

The home life which the boy led, aside from the conscious or unconscious schooling which he found in books, was one of many hardships, but within the sanctuary of a gracious and dignified home. The secluded valley in which he lived was three miles from the nearest village; from the date of the erection of the homestead till now no neighbor's roof has been in sight. The outdoor life was that of a farmer with cattle, tempered, indeed, in the short summer by the kindly gifts of nature, so happily shown in the poem "The Barefoot Boy," but for the most part a life of toil and endurance which left its marks indelibly in the shattered constitution of the poet. Twice a week the family drove to a Friends' meeting at Amesbury, eight miles distant, and in

winter without warm wraps or protecting robes. The old barn, built before that celebrated in "Snow-Bound," had no doors, and the winter snows drifted upon its floor, for neither beasts nor men, in the custom of the time, were expected to resist cold except by their native vigor. Whittier's companions of his own age were a brother and two sisters, one of whom, Elizabeth Whittier, was his nearest associate for the better part of his life, and the household held also that figure so beautiful and helpful in many families, an Aunt Mercy, as also a lively, adventurous bachelor, Uncle Moses. The father of the house, as we are told, was a man of few words; the mother, whose life was spared till that happy time when mother and son changed places in care-taking, had a rarely refined nature, in which the Quaker graces of calmness and order were developed into a noble beauty of living.

## II.

The poems written by him when he was a schoolboy display, as indeed did most of his writing for a few years afterward, little more than a versifying facility and a certain sense of correct form. His mother and his sister Mary encouraged him, but his father, a hard-headed, hard-working farmer, of sound judgment and independent habits of thinking, was too severely aware of the straitened condition of the family to think of anything else for his son than a life of toil like his own. Mary Whittier, with a sister's pride, sent one of her brother's poems, unknown to the author, to the "Free Press" of Newburyport, a new paper lately started which commended itself by its tone to the Quaker Whittier, so that he had subscribed to it. The poem was printed, and the first that the poet knew of it was when he caught the paper from the postman riding by the field where he and his father were working. It was such a moment as comes to a young poet, believing in himself and having that aspiration for recognition which is one of the holiest as it is one of the subtlest elements in the



poetic constitution. The poem was followed by another, which the author himself sent ; and when it was printed, it was introduced by an editorial note, in which the fame of the poet was foretold, and a hint given as to his youth and condition. For with the publication of the first poem, "The Exile's Departure," the editor had become so interested that he had sought the acquaintance of the writer.

Whittier was at work in the fields when the editor, himself a young man, called. He held back, but was induced by his sister to make himself presentable and come in to see the visitor. It was one of those first encounters which in the history of notable men are charged with most interesting potentialities. Garrison, for he was the editor, had not yet done more than take the first step on his thorny path to greatness, and Whittier was still working in the fields, though harboring poetic visitants. Garrison was only a few years older, and in later life those few years counted nothing, but now they were enough to lead him to take the tone of an adviser, and both to Greenleaf and to his father, who entered the room, he spoke of the promise of the youth and the importance of his acquiring an academic education.

It was against the more rigorous interpretation of the Friends' doctrine that literary culture should be made an end, and the notion that the boy should be sent to an academy was not encouraged ; but a few months later, Garrison having left Newburyport for Boston, and Whittier making a new connection with the Haverhill "Gazette," the editor of that paper, Mr. A. W. Thayer, gave the same advice and pressed the consideration that a new academy was shortly to be opened in Haverhill. He offered the boy a home in his own family, and the father now consented, moved also by the doubt if his son could stand the physical strain of farm work. He had no money, however, to spare, and the student must earn his own living. This he did by making a cheap kind of slipper, and devoted himself so faithfully to the industry in the few months intervening between the decision and the opening of the academy,

in May, 1827, that he earned enough to pay his expenses there for a term of six months. "He calculated so closely every item of expense," says his biographer, "that he knew before the beginning of the term that he would have twenty-five cents to spare at its close, and he actually had this sum of money in his pocket when his half year of study was over. It was the rule of his whole life never to buy anything until he had the money in hand to pay for it; and although his income was small and uncertain until past middle life, he was never in debt."

By teaching a district school a few weeks and aiding a merchant with bookkeeping, he was enabled to make out a full year of study, and meantime continued to write both verse and prose for the newspapers. By this means he paved the way for an invitation, when he was twenty-one years of age, to enter the printing-office in Boston of the Colliers, father and son, who published two weekly papers and a magazine. One of the weeklies was a political journal, "The Manufacturer," the other a paper of reform and humanitarianism called "The Philanthropist." Whittier had editorial charge of the former, and occupied himself with writing papers on temperance and the tariff, of which he was an ardent advocate, and with verses and tales. It was not altogether a congenial relation in which he found himself, though the occupation was one to which he was to turn naturally for some time to come for self-support; he remained with the Colliers for a year and a half, and then returned to his father's farm, with between four and five hundred dollars, the savings of half his salary. This he devoted to freeing the farm from the incumbrance of a mortgage, and himself took charge of the farm, for his father was rapidly failing in health.

### III.

The death of his father, in June, 1830, while it set him free from his father's occupation, made it still more imperative for him to earn his living, since the care of the family

fell upon him. He had been using his pen and studying, meanwhile, and his verses were bringing him acquaintances and friends. Through one of these, the brilliant George D. Prentice, he was induced to take up editorial work again in Hartford; but after a determined effort it became clear that his health was too fragile to permit him to devote himself to the exacting work of editing a journal, and in January, 1832, he returned to his home. Just at this time he published his first book, a mere pamphlet of twenty-eight octavo pages containing a poem of New England legendary life, entitled "Moll Pitcher." He had contributed besides more than a hundred poems in the three years since leaving the academy, and had written many more. But though thus active with his pen, his strongest ambition, it may be said, was at this time in the direction of politics. For the next four years he remained on the farm at Haverhill, and when in April, 1836, the farm was sold, he removed, with his mother and sister, to the village of Amesbury, chiefly that they might be nearer the Friends' meeting, but also that Whittier might be more in the centre of things. In his seclusion at East Haverhill he had eagerly watched the course of public events. He was a great admirer of Henry Clay, and a determined opponent of Jackson. With his engaging character, his intellectual readiness, and that political instinct which never deserted him, he was rapidly coming into public notice in his district, and his own desire for serving in office drew him on. To be a member of Congress he must be twenty-five years old, and at the election which was to occur just before his birthday there were many indications that he would be the nominee of his party. This was at the end of 1832, but before the next election occurred there was a great obstacle created by Whittier himself, and thenceforward through the years when he would naturally engage in public life he was practically debarred.

It was not the precariousness of his health which kept Whittier out of active politics, though this was a strong reason for avoiding the stress and strain of a public life, but



the decision which led him to enlist in an unpopular cause. In November, 1831, he had published his poem "To William Lloyd Garrison." It intimates a personal influence under which, with a moral nature fortified by great political insight, he began to consider seriously the movement for the abolition of slavery which was making itself evident here and there. As a specific result of this study he wrote in the spring of 1833 the pamphlet "Justice and Expediency," and published it at his own expense. It was a piece of writing compact with carefully gathered facts and logical deduction, and earnest with the rhetoric of personal conviction. Every sentence was an arraignment of slavery and a blow at his own chances of political office. The performance was an answer to the appeal of his own truthful nature, and it was a deliberate act of renunciation.

Now also began, at first with remote suggestions as in "Toussaint L'Ouverture," then nearer and nearer as he sings his tribute to the men of his day, known or unknown, who had been champions of freedom, — Storrs, Shipley, Torrey, — those bursts of passionate verse which were the vent of his soul overburdened with a sense of the deep wrong committed against God and man by the persistency of African slavery in the United States. In the years immediately following his decision to cast in his lot with the small band of despised anti-slavery agitators almost all of the poems which he wrote were of two sorts, — either breathings of a spirit craving close communion with God, or fiery, scarce-controlled outbursts of feeling upon the evils of slavery, and vials of wrath poured out on those who aided and abetted the monstrous wrong. If, in the years before, Whittier's verses, with their conventional smoothness, had drawn notice by the gentle spirit which suffused them, now his loud cry, violent and tempestuous, broke upon the ear with a harshness and yet an insistent fervor which compelled men to listen. It is indeed a striking phenomenon in poetic growth which one perceives who is familiar with Whittier's compositions and casts his eye down a chronolo-

gical list of his poems. Up to the date of his enlistment in the ranks of the anti-slavery army his ambition had been divided between literature and politics, with a taste in verse which was harmonious and an execution which was not wanting in melody, yet had no remarkable note. After he stepped into the ranks a great change came over his spirit. He rushed into verse in a tumultuous fashion, careless of the form, eager only to utter the message which half choked him with its violence. There was a fierce note to his poetry, rough, but tremendously earnest. This was the first effect, such a troubling of the waters as gave a somewhat turbid aspect to the stream, and for a while his verse was very largely declamatory, rhymed polemics.

But such poems as "Expostulation," beginning

"Our fellow-countrymen in chains!"

were to people then living scarcely so much poems as they were sounds of a great trumpet which were heard, not for their musical sonance, but for their power to stir the blood; and Whittier, though living almost in seclusion, became a name of note to many who would scarcely have known of him had he been a mere legislator or smooth-singing versemaker. He was recognized by the anti-slavery leaders as one of themselves, and this not only because of his powerful speech in song, but because on closer acquaintance he proved to be a most sagacious and wise reader of men and affairs. His own neighbors quickly learned this quality in him. He was sent to the legislature in 1835 and reëlected in 1836, but his frail health made it impossible for him to continue in this service. Nevertheless, he wielded political power with great skill aside from political office. He was indefatigable in accomplishing political ends through political men. No important nominations were made in his district without a preliminary conference with him, and more than once he compelled unwilling representatives to work for the great ends he had in view. It may be said here that though a steadfast leader in the anti-slavery cause he differed from

some of his associates, both now and throughout his life, in setting a high value upon existing political organizations. "From first to last," says his biographer, "he refused to come out from his party until he had done all that could be done to induce it to assist in the work of reform." Whittier himself, in an article written about this time, exclaims, "What an absurdity is moral action apart from political!" meaning of course when dealing with those subjects which demand political action. Once more, in a letter written to the anti-Texas convention of 1845, he said that though as an abolitionist he was no blind worshiper of the Union, he saw nothing to be gained by an effort, necessarily limited and futile, to dissolve it. The moral and political power requisite for dissolving the Union could far more easily abolish every vestige of slavery.

## IV.

We have anticipated a little in these comments the strict order of Whittier's life. In 1836 was published the first bound volume of his verse. It was confined to his poem "Mogg Megone," which he had before printed in the "New England Magazine." It may be taken as the last expression of Whittier's poetic mind before the great change came over it of which we have spoken, and he was himself later aware of its lack of genuine life; but at the end of 1837, Isaac Knapp, publisher of the "Liberator," Garrison's paper, to which Whittier had been contributing his stirring verses, without consulting the poet, issued a volume of over a hundred pages, entitled "Poems written during the Progress of the Abolition Question in the United States, between the Years 1830 and 1838. By John G. Whittier." This was the first collection of his miscellaneous poems, and a year later another volume was issued by Joseph Healy, the financial agent of the Anti-Slavery Society of Pennsylvania. Meanwhile Whittier had been staying awhile in Philadelphia, engaged in editing the "Pennsylvania Free-



man." It was during this time that Pennsylvania Hall was burnt by a mob enraged at the gathering there of an anti-slavery convention. Besides his work on the paper, which was frequently interrupted by ill health, he devoted himself in other ways to the promotion of the cause in which he was so ardently involved, but early in 1840 he found it imperative to give up all this work and retire to his home in Amesbury.

From this time forward he made no attempt to engage in any occupation which did not comport with a quiet life in his own home, except that for a few months in 1844 he resided in Lowell, editing the "*Middlesex Standard*." He wrote much for the papers, and the poetic stream also flowed with greater freedom and it may be said clearness. He contributed a number of poems to the "*Democratic Review*" and other periodicals, and in 1843 the firm of W. D. Ticknor published "*Lays of my Home, and Other Poems*," the first book from which Whittier received any remuneration. The struggle for maintenance through these years was somewhat severe, but in January, 1847, he formed a connection which was not only to afford him a more liberal support, but also to give him a most favorable outlet for his writings, both prose and verse.

It had been decided by the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society to establish a weekly paper in Washington, and the editorial charge was committed to Dr. Gamaliel Bailey, an intrepid and able man of experience. The paper was named the "*National Era*," and Whittier was invited to become a regular contributor, editorial and otherwise, but not required to do his work away from home. The paper, as is well known, was the medium for the publication of "*Uncle Tom's Cabin*," and its circulation was so considerable as to make it a source of profit to its conductors as early as by the end of the first year. From 1847 till 1860 Whittier made this paper the chief vehicle of his writings, contributing not only poems, but reviews of contemporary literature, editorial articles, letters, sketches, and the serial

which was published afterward in a book, "Leaves from Margaret Smith's Journal."

In 1849 B. B. Mussey & Co., of Boston, brought out a comprehensive collection of Whittier's Poems in a dignified octavo volume illustrated with designs by Hammatt Billings. It was a venture made quite as much on friendly as on commercial grounds. Mr. Mussey was a cordial supporter of the anti-slavery cause, and had a great admiration for Whittier's genius. He was determined to publish the poems in a worthy form, and his generous act met with an agreeable reward. Its success was a testimony to the repute in which Whittier was now held. At the same time his publishers, Messrs. Ticknor & Fields, were in negotiation with him for a new volume, and in 1850 appeared "Songs of Labor, and Other Poems."

The establishment of "The Atlantic Monthly" in 1857 gave another impetus to Whittier's poetic productiveness. Here was a singular illustration of the growth in the community about him of a spirit quite in agreement with his own personality. Opposition to slavery lay at the base of the origin of the magazine, and yet in the minds of its projectors this political bond was to unite men of letters and not simply antagonists of slavery. The "Atlantic" was to be the organ of the literary class, but it was to be by no means exclusively devoted to an anti-slavery crusade. Indeed, it would almost seem as if the specific purpose of the magazine was almost lost sight of at first in the richness and abundance of general literature which it immediately stimulated. It is easy now to see how natural and congenial a medium this was for Whittier's verse. In subjecting his political and literary ambition to a great moral purpose, so that he could no longer hope for political official power, he had fulfilled the true saying that to save one's life one must lose it. He had given up the name and place of a political magnate, but he had secured the more impregnable position of the power behind the throne in politics, and in place of a smooth versifier, holding the attention of those with whom

poetry was a plaything, he had become one of the few imperative voices of song, and had taken his place as one of the necessary men in the group of men of letters who now came together to represent the highest force in American literature.

## V.

The war for the Union naturally found Whittier strongly stirred, and more than ever watchful of the great issue which throughout his manhood had been constantly before his eyes; and his triumphant "*Laus Deo*" is as it were the *Nunc Dimittis* of this modern prophet and servant of the Lord. But Whittier was a Quaker, not in any conventional sense, but by birthright, conviction, and growing consciousness of communion with God. Though he wrote such a stirring ballad, therefore, as "*Barbara Frietchie*," he wrote also the lines addressed to his fellow believers: —

"The leveled gun, the battle brand  
We may not take:  
But, calmly loyal, we can stand  
And suffer with our suffering land  
For conscience' sake."

It is interesting also to observe how in this time of stress and pain he escaped to the calm solace of nature. His poem "*The Battle Autumn of 1862*" records this emotion specifically, but more than one poem in the group "*In War Time*" bears testimony to this sentiment. Other poems written during the years 1861–1865 illustrate the longing of Whittier's nature for relief from the terrible knowledge of human strife, a longing definitely expressed by him in the prelude address to William Bradford, the Quaker painter, prefacing "*Amy Wentworth*," in which he says: —

"We, doomed to watch a strife we may not share  
With other weapons than the patriot's prayer,  
Yet owning with full hearts and moistened eyes  
The awful beauty of self-sacrifice,  
And wrung by keenest sympathy for all  
Who gave their loved ones for the living wall



'Twixt law and treason, — in this evil day  
May haply find, through automatic play  
Of pen and pencil, solace to our pain,  
And hearten others with the strength we gain."

Something of the same note is struck in the introduction to "The Countess." But before the war closed, Whittier met with a personal loss which meant much to him every way. His sister Elizabeth, as we have seen, had been his closest companion, his most intimate acquaintance. He had shared his life with her in no light sense, and now he was to see the flame of that life flicker and at last expire in the early fall of 1864. The first poem after her death, "The Vanishers," in its theme, its faint note as of a bird calling from the wood, is singularly sweet, both as a sign of the return of the poet to the world after his flight from it in sympathy and imagination with the retreating spirit of his sister, and as a prophecy of the character of so large a part of Whittier's poetry from this time forward. "The Eternal Goodness," written a twelvemonth later, may be said more positively than any other poem to contain Whittier's creed, and the fullness of faith which characterizes it found free and cheerful expression again and again.

Yet another poem which immediately followed it is significant, not only by its repetition of his note of spiritual trust, but by its strong witness to the sane, human quality of Whittier's genius. "Snow-Bound," simple and radiant as it is with human life, is also the reflection of a mind equally at home in spiritual realities. It may fairly be said to sum up Whittier's personal experience and faith; and yet so absolutely free is it from egotism that it has taken its place as the representative poem of New England country life, quite as surely as Burns's "The Cotter's Saturday Night" expresses one large phase of Scottish life.

The success which attended "Snow-Bound" was immediate, and the result was such as to put Whittier at once beyond the caprices of fortune, and to give him so firm a place in the affections of his countrymen as to complete, as it



were, the years of his struggle and his patient endurance. There is something almost dramatic in the appearance of this poem. The war was over : the end of that long contest in which Whittier, physically weak, but spiritually strong, had been a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. What was the force which had been too mighty for a great entrenched wrong? With no conscious purpose, but in the simple delight of poetry, Whittier sang this winter idyl of the North, and one now sees how it imprisons the light which shatters the evil, for it is an epitome of homely work and a family life lived in the eye of God, "duty keeping pace with all."

## VI.

The history of Whittier's life after this date was written in his poems. The outward adventure was slight enough. He divided his year between the Amesbury home and that which he established with other kinsfolk at Oak Knoll in Danvers. In the summer time he was wont to seek the mountains of New Hampshire or the nearer beaches that stretch from Newburyport to Portsmouth. The scenes thus familiar to him were translated by him into song. Human life blended with the forms of nature, and he made this whole region as distinctively his poetic field as Wordsworth made the Lake district of Cumberland, or as Irving made the banks of the Hudson. In such a group as "The Tent on the Beach," in "Among the Hills," "The Witch of Wenham," "Sunset on the Bearcamp," "The Seeking of the Waterfall," "How the Women went from Dover," "The Homestead," and many others he records the delight which he took in nature and especially in the human associations with nature.

"The Tent on the Beach" again illustrates the personal attachments which he formed and which constituted so large an element in the last thirty years of his life. In actual contact and in the friendships formed through books, one may read the largeness of Whittier's sympathy with his fel-

lows, and the warmth of his generous nature. Such poems as the frequent ones commemorating Garrison, Sumner, Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, the Fieldses, Mrs. Child, the Spoffords, Stedman, Barnard, Bayard Taylor, Weld, and others illustrate the range of his friendship; but the poems also which bear the names of Tilden, Mulford, Thiers, Halleck, Agassiz, Garibaldi, illustrate likewise a strong sense of the lives of men who perhaps never came within the scope of personal acquaintance.

Nor was it only through human lives that he touched the world about him. His biographer bears witness to the assiduity with which he compensated in later years for the restrictions imposed by necessity on his education in earlier years. He became a great and discursive reader, and his poems, especially after "*Snow-Bound*," contain many proofs of this, both in the suggestions which gave rise to them and in the allusions which they contain. Northern literature is reflected in "*The Dole of Jarl Thorkell*," "*King Volmer and Elsie*," "*The Brown Dwarf of Rügen*," and others; Eastern life and religion reappear in "*Oriental Maxims*," "*Hymns of the Brahmo Somaj*," "*The Brewing of Soma*," "*Giving and Taking*," and many more; and history, especially that involved with his own religious faith, gave opportunity for "*The King's Missive*," "*St. Gregory's Guest*," "*Banished from Massachusetts*," "*The Two Elizabeths*," "*The Pennsylvania Pilgrim*."

Yet, as we suggested above, the most constant strain, after all, was that which found so full expression in "*The Eternal Goodness*." So pervasive in Whittier's mind was this thought of God that it did not so much seek occasion for formal utterance, as use with the naturalness of breathing such opportunities as arose, touching with light one theme after another, and forming, indeed, the last whispered voice heard from his lips, "*Love to all the world*."

It was a serene life of the spirit which Whittier led in the closing years of his life, and he was secure in friendship and the shelter of home. He read, he saw his neighbors

and friends, he wrote letters, he took the liveliest interest in current affairs, especially in politics. He had been a presidential elector in both the Lincoln campaigns; so that he used humorously to say that he was the only person who had had the opportunity to vote for Lincoln four times. He was much sought after for occasional poems, and he complied with these requests from time to time, as in his "Centennial Hymn," "In the Old South," "The Bartholdi Statue," "One of the Signers," and "Haverhill;" but he was quite as likely to take hint from an occasion without the asking. Yet all this time he was assailed by infirmities which would have shaken the serenity of most. He suffered intensely from neuralgic disorders, and was sadly broken in the last years of his life.

He sang up to the end, one may say. His last poem, written only a few weeks before his death, commemorated the eighty-third birthday of Oliver Wendell Holmes. True to the controlling spirit of his life, he sings, —

"The hour draws near, howe'er delayed and late,  
When at the Eternal Gate  
We leave the words and works we call our own,  
And lift void hands alone

"For love to fill. Our nakedness of soul  
Brings to that Gate no toll;  
Giftless we come to Him, who all things gives,  
And live because He lives."

He died at Hampton Falls, New Hampshire, September 7, 1892, in the eighty-fifth year of his age.

## SNOW-BOUND: A WINTER IDYL.

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TO THE MEMORY OF THE HOUSEHOLD IT DESCRIBES

THIS POEM IS DEDICATED BY THE AUTHOR.

THE inmates of the family at the Whittier homestead who are referred to in the poem were my father, mother, my brother and two sisters, and my uncle and aunt, both unmarried. In addition, there was the district school master, who boarded with us. The "not unfear'd, half-welcome guest" was Harriet Livermore, daughter of Judge Livermore, of New Hampshire, a young woman of fine natural ability, enthusiastic, eccentric, with slight control over her violent temper, which sometimes made her religious profession doubtful. She was equally ready to exhort in school-house prayer-meetings and dance in a Washington ball-room, while her father was a member of Congress. She early embraced the doctrine of the Second Advent, and felt it her duty to proclaim the Lord's speedy coming. With this message she crossed the Atlantic and spent the greater part of a long life in travelling over Europe and Asia. She lived some time with Lady Hester Stanhope, a woman as fantastic and mentally strained as herself, on the slope of Mt. Lebanon, but finally quarrelled with her in regard to two white horses with red marks on their backs which suggested the idea of saddles, on which her titled hostess expected to ride into Jerusalem with the Lord. A friend of mine found her, when quite an old woman, wandering in Syria with a tribe of Arabs, who, with the Oriental notion that madness is inspiration, accepted her as their prophetess



and leader. At the time referred to in *Snow-Bound* she was boarding at the Rocks Village, about two miles from us.

In my boyhood, in our lonely farm-house, we had scanty sources of information; few books and only a small weekly newspaper. Our only annual was the almanac. Under such circumstances story-telling was a necessary resource in the long winter evenings. My father when a young man had traversed the wilderness to Canada, and could tell us of his adventures with Indians and wild beasts, and of his sojourn in the French villages. My uncle was ready with his record of hunting and fishing, and, it must be confessed, with stories which he at least half believed, of witchcraft and apparitions. My mother, who was born in the Indian-haunted region of Somersworth, New Hampshire, between Dover and Portsmouth, told us of the inroads of the savages, and the narrow escape of her ancestors. She described strange people who lived on the Piscataqua and Cocheco, among whom was Bantam the sorcerer. I have in my possession the wizard's "conjuring book," which he solemnly opened when consulted. It is a copy of Cornelius Agrippa's *Magic*, printed in 1651, dedicated to Doctor Robert Child, who, like Michael Scott, had learned

"the art of glammorie  
In Padua beyond the sea,"

and who is famous in the annals of Massachusetts, where he was at one time a resident, as the first man who dared petition the General Court for liberty of conscience. The full title of the book is *Three Books of Occult Philosophy: by Henry Cornelius Agrippa, Knight, Doctor of both Laws, Counsellor to Cæsar's Sacred Majesty and Judge of the Prerogative Court.*

I.

SNOW-BOUND.

A WINTER IDYL.

"As the Spirits of Darkness be stronger in the dark, so good Spirits which be Angels of Light are augmented not only by the Divine light of the Sun, but also by our common VVood Fire : and as the Celestial Fire drives away dark spirits, so also this our Fire of VVood doth the same." — COR. AGRIPPA, *Occult Philosophy*, Book I. ch. v.

"Announced by all the trumpets of the sky,  
Arrives the snow ; and, driving o'er the fields,  
Seems nowhere to alight ; the whited air  
Hides hills and woods, the river and the heaven,  
And veils the farm-house at the garden's end.  
The sled and traveller stopped, the courier's feet  
Delayed, all friends shut out, the housemates sit  
Around the radiant fireplace, inclosed  
In a tumultuous privacy of storm."

EMERSON, *The Snow-Storm*.

THE sun that brief December day  
Rose cheerless over hills of gray,  
And, darkly circled, gave at noon  
A sadder light than waning moon.  
5 Slow tracing down the thickening sky  
Its mute and ominous prophecy,  
A portent seeming less than threat,  
It sank from sight before it set.  
A chill no coat, however stout,  
10 Of homespun stuff could quite shut out,  
A hard, dull bitterness of cold,  
That checked, mid-vein, the circling race

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Of life-blood in the sharpened face,  
The coming of the snow-storm told.  
15 The wind blew east ; we heard the roar  
Of Ocean on his wintry shore,  
And felt the strong pulse throbbing there  
Beat with low rhythm our inland air.

Meanwhile we did our nightly chores, —  
20 Brought in the wood from out of doors,  
Littered the stalls, and from the mows  
Raked down the herd's-grass for the cows :  
Heard the horse whinnying for his corn ;  
And, sharply clashing horn on horn,  
25 Impatient down the stanchion rows  
The cattle shake their walnut bows ;  
While, peering from his early perch  
Upon the scaffold's pole of birch,  
The cock his crested helmet bent  
30 And down his querulous challenge sent.  
Unwarmed by any sunset light  
The gray day darkened into night,  
A night made hoary with the swarm  
And whirl-dance of the blinding storm,  
35 As zigzag wavering to and fro  
Crossed and recrossed the wingèd snow :  
And ere the early bedtime came  
The white drift piled the window-frame,  
And through the glass the clothes-line posts  
40 Looked in like tall and sheeted ghosts.

So all night long the storm roared on :  
The morning broke without a sun ;  
In tiny spherule traced with lines  
Of Nature's geometric signs,



- 45 In starry flake and pellicle  
 All day the hoary meteor fell ;  
 And, when the second morning shone,  
 We looked upon a world unknown,  
 On nothing we could call our own.
- 50 Around the glistening wonder bent  
 The blue walls of the firmament,  
 No cloud above, no earth below, —  
 A universe of sky and snow !  
 The old familiar sights of ours
- 55 Took marvellous shapes ; strange domes and towers  
 Rose up where sty or corn-crib stood,  
 Or garden-wall or belt of wood ;  
 A smooth white mound the brush-pile showed,  
 A fenceless drift what once was road ;
- 60 The bridle-post an old man sat  
 With loose-flung coat and high cocked hat ;  
 The well-curb had a Chinese roof ;  
 And even the long sweep, high aloof,  
 In its slant splendor, seemed to tell
- 65 Of Pisa's leaning miracle.

A prompt, decisive man, no breath  
 Our father wasted : " Boys, a path ! "  
 Well pleased, (for when did farmer boy  
 Count such a summons less than joy ?)

65. The Leaning Tower of Pisa, in Italy, which inclines from the perpendicular a little more than six feet in eighty, is a campanile, or bell-tower, built of white marble, very beautiful, but so famous for its singular deflection from perpendicularity as to be known almost wholly as a curiosity. Opinions differ as to the leaning being the result of accident or design, but the better judgment makes it an effect of the character of the soil on which the town is built. The Cathedral to which it belongs has suffered so much from a similar cause that there is not a vertical line in it.

- 70 Our buskins on our feet we drew ;  
With mittened hands, and caps drawn low,  
To guard our necks and ears from snow,  
We cut the solid whiteness through ;  
And, where the drift was deepest, made  
75 A tunnel walled and overlaid  
With dazzling crystal : we had read  
Of rare Aladdin's wondrous cave,  
And to our own his name we gave,  
With many a wish the luck were ours  
80 To test his lamp's supernal powers.  
We reached the barn with merry din,  
And roused the prisoned brutes within.  
The old horse thrust his long head out,  
And grave with wonder gazed about ;  
85 The cock his lusty greeting said,  
And forth his speckled harem led ;  
The oxen lashed their tails, and hooked,  
And mild reproach of hunger looked ;  
The hornèd patriarch of the sheep,  
90 Like Egypt's Amun roused from sleep,  
Shook his sage head with gesture mute,  
And emphasized with stamp of foot.

All day the gusty north-wind bore  
The loosening drift its breath before ;  
95 Low circling round its southern zone,  
The sun through dazzling snow-mist shone.  
No church-bell lent its Christian tone

77. For the story of Aladdin and his lamp see any edition of *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, or *Riverside Literature Series*, No. 117.

90. *Amun*, or *Ammon*, was an Egyptian being, representing an attribute of Deity under the form of a ram.

To the savage air, no social smoke  
Curled over woods of snow-hung oak.

- 100 A solitude made more intense  
By dreary-voicèd elements,  
The shrieking of the mindless wind,  
The moaning tree-boughs swaying blind,  
And on the glass the unmeaning beat  
105 Of ghostly finger-tips of sleet.  
Beyond the circle of our hearth  
No welcome sound of toil or mirth  
Unbound the spell, and testified  
Of human life and thought outside.  
110 We minded that the sharpest ear  
The buried brooklet could not hear,  
The music of whose liquid lip  
Had been to us companionship,  
And, in our lonely life, had grown  
115 To have an almost human tone.

- As night drew on, and, from the crest  
Of wooded knolls that ridged the west,  
The sun, a snow-blown traveller, sank  
From sight beneath the smothering bank,  
120 We piled with care our nightly stack  
Of wood against the chimney-back, —  
The oaken log, green, huge, and thick,  
And on its top the stout back-stick ;  
The knotty forestick laid apart,  
125 And filled between with curious art  
The ragged brush ; then, hovering near,  
We watched the first red blaze appear,  
Heard the sharp crackle, caught the gleam  
On whitewashed wall and sagging beam,  
130 Until the old, rude-furnished room

Burst, flower-like, into rosy bloom ;  
While radiant with a mimic flame  
Outside the sparkling drift became,  
And through the bare-boughed lilac-tree  
135 Our own warm hearth seemed blazing free.  
The crane and pendent trammels showed,  
The Turk's heads on the andirons glowed ;  
While childish fancy, prompt to tell  
The meaning of the miracle,  
140 Whispered the old rhyme : "*Under the tree,  
When fire outdoors burns merrily,  
There the witches are making tea.*"

The moon above the eastern wood  
Shone at its full ; the hill-range stood  
145 Transfigured in the silver flood,  
Its blown snows flashing cold and keen,  
Dead white, save where some sharp ravine  
Took shadow, or the sombre green  
Of hemlocks turned to pitchy black  
150 Against the whiteness of their back.  
For such a world and such a night  
Most fitting that unwarming light,  
Which only seemed where'er it fell  
To make the coldness visible.

155 Shut in from all the world without,  
We sat the clean-winged hearth about,  
Content to let the north-wind roar  
In baffled rage at pane and door,  
While the red logs before us beat  
160 The frost-line back with tropic heat ;  
And ever, when a louder blast  
Shook beam and rafter as it passed,





THE WHITTIER HOME.

The above picture is copied from a photograph of the kitchen in the Whittier homestead at East Haverhill, Mass., so graphically described in "Snow-Bound." The room on the right, opening from the kitchen, is the chamber in which the poet was born. The homestead is now owned by a Whittier Memorial Association, and, being open to the public, is visited by thousands of persons annually.



The merrier up its roaring draught  
The great throat of the chimney laughed,  
165 The house-dog on his paws outspread  
Laid to the fire his drowsy head,  
The cat's dark silhouette on the wall  
A couchant tiger's seemed to fall ;  
And, for the winter fireside meet,  
170 Between the andirons' straddling feet,  
The mug of cider simmered slow,  
The apples sputtered in a row,  
And, close at hand, the basket stood  
With nuts from brown October's wood.

175 What matter how the night behaved ?  
What matter how the north-wind raved ?  
Blow high, blow low, not all its snow  
Could quench our hearth-fire's ruddy glow.  
O Time and Change ! — with hair as gray  
180 As was my sire's that winter day,  
How strange it seems, with so much gone  
Of life and love, to still live on !  
Ah, brother ! only I and thou  
Are left of all that circle now, —  
185 The dear home faces whereupon  
That fitful firelight paled and shone.  
Henceforward, listen as we will,  
The voices of that hearth are still ;  
Look where we may, the wide earth o'er,  
190 Those lighted faces smile no more.  
We tread the paths their feet have worn,  
We sit beneath their orchard trees,  
We hear, like them, the hum of bees  
And rustle of the bladed corn ;  
195 We turn the pages that they read,

Their written words we linger o'er,  
 But in the sun they cast no shade,  
 No voice is heard, no sign is made,  
 No step is on the conscious floor!  
 200 Yet Love will dream and Faith will trust  
 (Since He who knows our need is just)  
 That somehow, somewhere, meet we must.  
 { Alas for him who never sees  
 The stars shine through his cypress-trees!  
 205 Who, hopeless, lays his dead away,  
 Nor looks to see the breaking day  
 Across the mournful marbles play!  
 Who hath not learned, in hours of faith,  
 The truth to flesh and sense unknown,  
 210 That Life is ever lord of Death,  
 And Love can never lose its own!

We sped the time with stories old,  
 Wrought puzzles out, and riddles told,  
 Or stammered from our school-book lore  
 215 "The chief of Gambia's golden shore."  
 How often since, when all the land  
 Was clay in Slavery's shaping hand,  
 As if a trumpet called, I've heard  
 Dame Mercy Warren's rousing word:  
 220 *Does not the voice of reason cry,*  
*Claim the first right which Nature gave,*

215. This line is taken from a poem entitled *The African Chief*, written by Mrs. Sarah Wentworth Morton; the school-book referred to was Caleb Bingham's *The American Preceptor*.

219. Mrs. Mercy Warren was the wife of James Warren, a prominent patriot at the beginning of the Revolution. Her poetry was read in an age that had in America little to read under that name; her society was sought by the best men.



*From the red scourge of bondage fly  
Nor deign to live a burdened slave ! ”*

- Our father rode again his ride  
225 On Memphremagog's wooded side ;  
Sat down again to moose and samp  
In trapper's hut and Indian camp ;  
Lived o'er the old idyllic ease  
Beneath St. François' hemlock trees ;  
230 Again for him the moonlight shone  
On Norman cap and bodiced zone ;  
Again he heard the violin play  
Which led the village dance away,  
And mingled in its merry whirl  
235 The grandam and the laughing girl.  
Or, nearer home, our steps he led  
Where Salisbury's level marshes spread  
Mile-wide as flies the laden bee ;  
Where merry mowers, hale and strong,  
240 Swept, scythe on scythe, their swaths along  
The low green prairies of the sea.  
We shared the fishing off Boar's Head,  
And round the rocky Isles of Shoals  
The hake-broil on the driftwood coals ;  
245 The chowder on the sand-beach made,  
Dipped by the hungry, steaming hot,  
With spoons of clam-shell from the pot.  
We heard the tales of witchcraft old,  
And dream and sign and marvel told  
250 To sleepy listeners as they lay  
Stretched idly on the salted hay,  
Adrift along the winding shores,  
When favoring breezes deigned to blow  
The square sail of the gundalow,  
255 And idle lay the useless oars.

Our mother, while she turned her wheel  
Or run the new-knit stocking-heel,  
Told how the Indian hordes came down  
At midnight on Cochecho town,  
260 And how her own great-uncle bore  
His cruel scalp-mark to fourscore.  
Recalling, in her fitting phrase,  
    So rich and picturesque and free  
    (The common unrhymed poetry  
265 Of simple life and country ways),  
The story of her early days, —  
She made us welcome to her home ;  
Old hearths grew wide to give us room ;  
We stole with her a frightened look  
270 At the gray wizard's conjuring-book,  
The fame whereof went far and wide  
Through all the simple country-side ;  
We heard the hawks at twilight play,  
The boat-horn on Piscataqua,  
275 The loon's weird laughter far away ;  
We fished her little trout-brook, knew  
What flowers in wood and meadow grew,  
What sunny hillsides autumn-brown  
She climbed to shake the ripe nuts down,  
280 Saw where in sheltered cove and bay  
The ducks' black squadron anchored lay,  
And heard the wild geese calling loud  
Beneath the gray November cloud.  
Then, haply, with a look more grave,  
285 And soberer tone, some tale she gave  
From painful Sewel's ancient tome,

259. Dover in New Hampshire.

286. William Sewel was the historian of the Quakers. Charles

Beloved in every Quaker home,  
 Of faith fire-winged by martyrdom,  
 Or Chalkley's Journal, old and quaint, —  
 290 Gentlest of skippers, rare sea-saint ! —  
 Who, when the dreary calms prevailed,  
 And water-butt and bread-cask failed,  
 And cruel, hungry eyes pursued

Lamb seemed to have as good an opinion of the book as Whittier. In his essay, *A Quakers' Meeting*, in *Essays of Elia*, he says: "Reader, if you are not acquainted with it, I would recommend to you, above all church-narratives, to read Sewel's *History of the Quakers*. . . . It is far more edifying and affecting than anything you will read of Wesley or his colleagues."

289. Thomas Chalkley was an Englishman of Quaker parentage, born in 1675, who travelled extensively as a preacher, and finally made his home in Philadelphia. He died in 1749 ; his *Journal* was first published in 1747. His own narrative of the incident which the poet relates is as follows: "To stop their murmuring, I told them they should not need to cast lots, which was usual in such cases, which of us should die first, for I would freely offer up my life to do them good. One said, 'God bless you ! I will not eat any of you.' Another said, 'He would die before he would eat any of me ;' and so said several. I can truly say, on that occasion, at that time, my life was not dear to me, and that I was serious and ingenuous in my proposition ; and as I was leaning over the side of the vessel, thoughtfully considering my proposal to the company, and looking in my mind to Him that made me, a very large dolphin came up towards the top or surface of the water, and looked me in the face ; and I called the people to put a hook into the sea, and take him, for here is one come to redeem me (I said to them). And they put a hook into the sea, and the fish readily took it, and they caught him. He was longer than myself. I think he was about six feet long, and the largest that ever I saw. This plainly showed us that we ought not to distrust the providence of the Almighty. The people were quieted by this act of Providence, and murmured no more. We caught enough to eat plentifully of, till we got into the capes of Delaware."

His portly presence, mad for food,  
 295 With dark hints muttered under breath  
 Of casting lots for life or death,  
 Offered, if Heaven withheld supplies,  
 To be himself the sacrifice.  
 Then, suddenly, as if to save  
 300 The good man from his living grave,  
 A ripple on the water grew,  
 A school of porpoise flashed in view.  
 "Take, eat," he said, "and be content;  
 These fishes in my stead are sent  
 305 By Him who gave the tangled ram  
 To spare the child of Abraham."

Our uncle, innocent of books,  
 Was rich in lore of fields and brooks,  
 The ancient teachers never dumb  
 310 Of Nature's unhoused lyceum.  
 In moons and tides and weather wise,  
 He read the clouds as prophecies,  
 And foul or fair could well divine,  
 By many an occult hint and sign,  
 315 Holding the cunning-warded keys  
 To all the woodcraft mysteries;  
 Himself to Nature's heart so near  
 That all her voices in his ear  
 Of beast or bird had meanings clear,  
 320 Like Apollonius of old,

306. See Genesis xxii. 13.

310. The measure requires the accent ly'ceum, but in stricter use the accent is lyce'um.

320. A philosopher born in the first century of the Christian era, of whom many strange stories were told, especially regarding his converse with birds and animals.



Who knew the tales the sparrows told,  
 Or Hermes, who interpreted  
 What the sage cranes of Nilus said ;  
 A simple, guileless, childlike man,  
 325 Content to live where life began ;  
 Strong only on his native grounds,  
 The little world of sights and sounds  
 Whose girdle was the parish bounds,  
 Whereof his fondly partial pride  
 330 The common features magnified,  
 As Surrey hills to mountains grew  
 In White of Selborne's loving view,  
 He told how teal and loon he shot,  
 And how the eagle's eggs he got,  
 335 The feats on pond and river done,  
 The prodigies of rod and gun ;  
 Till, warming with the tales he told,  
 Forgotten was the outside cold,  
 The bitter wind unheeded blew,  
 340 From ripening corn the pigeons flew,  
 The partridge drummed i' the wood, the mink  
 Went fishing down the river-brink.  
 In fields with bean or clover gay,  
 The woodchuck, like a hermit gray,  
 345 Peered from the doorway of his cell ;  
 The muskrat plied the mason's trade,

322. Hermes Trismegistus, a celebrated Egyptian priest and philosopher, to whom was attributed the revival of geometry, arithmetic, and art among the Egyptians. He was little later than Apollonius.

332. Gilbert White, of Selborne, England, was a clergyman who wrote the *Natural History of Selborne*, a minute, affectionate, and charming description of what could be seen as it were from his own doorstep. The accuracy of his observation and the delightfulness of his manner have kept the book a classic.

And tier by tier his mud-walls laid ;  
And from the shagbark overhead  
The grizzled squirrel dropped his shell.

350 Next, the dear aunt, whose smile of cheer  
And voice in dreams I see and hear, —  
The sweetest woman ever Fate  
Perverse denied a household mate,  
Who, lonely, homeless, not the less  
355 Found peace in love's unselfishness,  
And welcome whereso'er she went,  
A calm and gracious element,  
Whose presence seemed the sweet income  
And womanly atmosphere of home, —  
360 Called up her girlhood memories,  
The huskings and the apple-bees,  
The sleigh-rides and the summer sails,  
Weaving through all the poor details  
And homespun warp of circumstance  
365 A golden woof-thread of romance.  
For well she kept her genial mood  
And simple faith of maidenhood ;  
Before her still a cloud-land lay,  
The mirage loomed across her way ;  
370 The morning dew, that dried so soon  
With others, glistened at her noon ;  
Through years of toil and soil and care,  
From glossy tress to thin gray hair,  
All unprofaned she held apart  
375 The virgin fancies of the heart.  
Be shame to him of woman born  
Who had for such but thought of scorn.

There, too, our elder sister plied  
Her evening task the stand beside ;

380 A full, rich nature, free to trust,  
 Truthful and almost sternly just,  
 Impulsive, earnest, prompt to act,  
 And make her generous thought a fact,  
 Keeping with many a light disguise  
 385 The secret of self-sacrifice.  
 O heart sore-tried ! thou hast the best  
 That Heaven itself could give thee, — rest,  
 Rest from all bitter thoughts and things !  
 How many a poor one's blessing went  
 390 With thee beneath the low green tent  
 Whose curtain never outward swings !

As one who held herself a part  
 Of all she saw, and let her heart  
 Against the household bosom lean,  
 395 Upon the motley-braided mat  
 Our youngest and our dearest sat,  
 Lifting her large, sweet, asking eyes,  
 Now bathed within the fadeless green  
 And holy peace of Paradise.  
 400 Oh, looking from some heavenly hill,  
 Or from the shade of saintly palms,  
 Or silver reach of river calms,  
 Do those large eyes behold me still ?  
 With me one little year ago : —  
 405 The chill weight of the winter snow  
 For months upon her grave has lain ;  
 And now, when summer south-winds blow  
 And brier and harebell bloom again,  
 I tread the pleasant paths we trod,  
 410 I see the violet-sprinkled sod,

398. *Th' unfading green* would be harsher but more correct,  
 since the termination *less* is added to nouns and not to verbs.

- Whereon she leaned, too frail and weak  
The hillside flowers she loved to seek,  
Yet following me where'er I went  
With dark eyes full of love's content.
- 415 The birds are glad ; the brier-rose fills  
The air with sweetness ; all the hills  
Stretch green to June's unclouded sky ;  
But still I wait with ear and eye  
For something gone which should be nigh,
- 420 A loss in all familiar things,  
In flower that blooms, and bird that sings.  
And yet, dear heart ! remembering thee,  
Am I not richer than of old ?  
Safe in thy immortality,
- 425 What change can reach the wealth I hold ?  
What chance can mar the pearl and gold  
Thy love hath left in trust with me ?  
And while in life's late afternoon,  
Where cool and long the shadows grow,
- 430 I walk to meet the night that soon  
Shall shape and shadow overflow,  
I cannot feel that thou art far,  
Since near at need the angels are ;  
And when the sunset gates unbar,
- 435 Shall I not see thee waiting stand,  
And, white against the evening star,  
The welcome of thy beckoning hand ?

Brisk wielder of the birch and rule,  
The master of the district school

439. This schoolmaster was George Haskell, a native of Harvard, Mass., who was a Dartmouth College student at the time referred to in the poem, and afterward became a physician. He removed to Illinois, where he was active in founding Shurt-



440 Held at the fire his favored place ;  
Its warm glow lit a laughing face  
Fresh-hued and fair, where scarce appeared  
The uncertain prophecy of beard.  
He teased the mitten-blinded cat,  
445 Played cross-pins on my uncle's hat,  
Sang songs, and told us what befalls  
In classic Dartmouth's college halls.  
Born the wild Northern hills among,  
From whence his yeoman father wrung  
450 By patient toil subsistence scant,  
Not competence and yet not want,  
He early gained the power to pay  
His cheerful, self-reliant way ;  
Could doff at ease his scholar's gown  
455 To peddle wares from town to town ;  
Or through the long vacation's reach  
In lonely lowland districts teach,  
Where all the droll experience found  
At stranger hearths in boarding round,  
460 The moonlit skater's keen delight,  
The sleigh-drive through the frosty night,  
The rustic party, with its rough  
Accompaniment of blind-man's-buff,  
And whirling plate, and forfeits paid,  
465 His winter task a pastime made.  
Happy the snow-locked homes wherein  
He tuned his merry violin,

left College. Later he made his home in New Jersey, and aided in establishing an industrial school there and in laying out a model community. Till near the end of his own life Mr. Whittier could not recall the teacher's name, and Mr. Haskell seems never to have known that he was immortalized in *Snow-Bound*.

Or played the athlete in the barn,  
Or held the good dame's winding yarn,  
470 Or mirth-provoking versions told  
Of classic legends rare and old,  
Wherein the scenes of Greece and Rome  
Had all the commonplace of home,  
And little seemed at best the odds  
475 'Twixt Yankee pedlers and old gods ;  
Where Pindus-born Arachthus took  
The guise of any grist-mill brook,  
And dread Olympus at his will  
Became a huckleberry hill.  
480 A careless boy that night he seemed ;  
But at his desk he had the look  
And air of one who wisely schemed,  
And hostage from the future took  
In trainèd thought and lore of book.  
485 Large-brained, clear-eyed, — of such as he  
Shall Freedom's young apostles be,  
Who, following in War's bloody trail,  
Shall every lingering wrong assail ;  
All chains from limb and spirit strike,  
490 Uplift the black and white alike ;  
Scatter before their swift advance  
The darkness and the ignorance,  
The pride, the lust, the squalid sloth,  
Which nurtured Treason's monstrous growth,  
495 Made murder pastime, and the hell  
Of prison-torture possible ;  
The cruel lie of caste refute,

476. Pindus is the mountain chain which, running from north to south, nearly bisects Greece. Five rivers take their rise from the central peak, the Aöus, the Arachthus, the Haliatmon, the Penëus, and the Achelöus.

Old forms remould, and substitute  
For Slavery's lash the freeman's will,  
500 For blind routine, wise-handed skill ;  
A school-house plant on every hill,  
Stretching in radiate nerve-lines thence  
The quick wires of intelligence ;  
Till North and South together brought  
505 Shall own the same electric thought,  
In peace a common flag salute,  
And, side by side in labor's free  
And unresentful rivalry,  
Harvest the fields wherein they fought.

510 Another guest that winter night  
Flashed back from lustrous eyes the light.  
Unmarked by time, and yet not young,  
The honeyed music of her tongue  
And words of meekness scarcely told  
515 A nature passionate and bold,  
Strong, self-concentred, spurning guide,  
Its milder features dwarfed beside  
Her unbent will's majestic pride.  
She sat among us, at the best,  
520 A not unfeared, half-welcome guest,  
Rebuking with her cultured phrase  
Our homeliness of words and ways.  
(A certain pard-like, treacherous grace  
Swayed the lithe limbs) and dropped the lash,  
525 Lent the white teeth their dazzling flash ;  
And under low brows, black with night,  
Rayed out at times a dangerous light ;  
The sharp heat-lightnings of her face  
Presaging ill to him whom Fate  
530 Condemned to share her love or hate.

- A woman tropical, intense  
 In thought and act, in soul and sense,  
 She blended in a like degree  
 The vixen and the devotee,  
 535 Revealing with each freak or feint  
 The temper of Petruchio's Kate,  
 The raptures of Siena's saint.  
 Her tapering hand and rounded wrist  
 Had facile power to form a fist;  
 540 The warm, dark languish of her eyes  
 Was never safe from wrath's surprise.  
 Brows saintly calm and lips devout  
 Knew every change of scowl and pout;  
 And the sweet voice had notes more high  
 545 And shrill for social battle-cry.  
 Since then what old cathedral town  
 Has missed her pilgrim staff and gown,  
 What convent-gate has held its lock  
 Against the challenge of her knock!  
 550 Through Smyrna's plague-hushed thoroughfares,  
 Up sea-set Malta's rocky stairs,  
 Gray olive slopes of hills that hem  
 Thy tombs and shrines, Jerusalem,  
 Or startling on her desert throne  
 555 The crazy Queen of Lebanon  
 With claims fantastic as her own,  
 Her tireless feet have held their way;  
 And still, unrestful, bowed, and gray,

536. See Shakespeare's comedy of *The Taming of the Shrew*.

537. St. Catherine of Siena, who is represented as having wonderful visions. She made a vow of silence for three years.

555. An interesting account of Lady Hester Stanhope, an English gentlewoman who led a singular life on Mount Lebanon in Syria, will be found in Kinglake's *Eothen*, chapter viii.



She watches under Eastern skies,  
 560 With hope each day renewed and fresh,  
 The Lord's quick coming in the flesh,  
 Whereof she dreams and prophesies !  
 Where'er her troubled path may be,  
 The Lord's sweet pity with her go !  
 565 The outward wayward life we see,  
 The hidden springs we may not know.  
 Nor is it given us to discern  
 What threads the fatal sisters spun,  
 Through what ancestral years has run  
 570 The sorrow with the woman born,  
 What forged her cruel chain of moods,  
 What set her feet in solitudes,  
 And held the love within her mute,  
 What mingled madness in the blood,  
 575 A lifelong discord and annoy,  
 Water of tears with oil of joy,  
 And hid within the folded bud  
 Perversities of flower and fruit.  
 It is not ours to separate  
 580 The tangled skein of will and fate,  
 To show what metes and bounds should stand  
 Upon the soul's debatable land,  
 And between choice and Providence  
 Divide the circle of events ;  
 585 But He who knows our frame is just,  
 Merciful and compassionate,

562. This "not unfear'd, half-welcome guest," Miss Harriet Livermore, at the time of this narrative was about twenty-eight years old. She once went on an independent mission to the Western Indians, whom she, in common with some others, believed to be remnants of the lost tribes of Israel, but much of her life was spent in the Orient. See the introductory note to this poem, page 1.

And full of sweet assurances  
And hope for all the language is,  
That He remembereth we are dust !

590 At last the great logs, crumbling low,  
Sent out a dull and duller glow,  
The bull's-eye watch that hung in view,  
Ticking its weary circuit through,  
Pointed with mutely-warning sign  
595 Its black hand to the hour of nine.  
That sign the pleasant circle broke :  
My uncle ceased his pipe to smoke,  
Knocked from its bowl the refuse gray,  
And laid it tenderly away,  
600 Then roused himself to safely cover  
The dull red brand with ashes over.  
And while, with care, our mother laid  
The work aside, her steps she stayed  
One moment, seeking to express  
605 Her grateful sense of happiness  
For food and shelter, warmth and health,  
And love's contentment more than wealth,  
With simple wishes (not the weak,  
Vain prayers which no fulfilment seek,  
610 But such as warm the generous heart,  
O'er-prompt to do with Heaven its part)  
That none might lack, that bitter night,  
For bread and clothing, warmth and light.

Within our beds awhile we heard  
615 The wind that round the gables roared,  
With now and then a ruder shock,  
Which made our very bedsteads rock.  
We heard the loosened clapboards tost,

The board-nails snapping in the frost ;  
620 And on us, through the unplastered wall,  
Felt the lightsifted snow-flakes fall ;  
But sleep stole on, as sleep will do  
When hearts are light and life is new ;  
Faint and more faint the murmurs grew,  
625 Till in the summer-land of dreams  
They softened to the sound of streams,  
Low stir of leaves, and dip of oars,  
And lapsing waves on quiet shores.

Next morn we wakened with the shout  
630 Of merry voices high and clear ;  
And saw the teamsters drawing near  
To break the drifted highways out.  
Down the long hillside treading slow  
We saw the half-buried oxen go,  
635 Shaking the snow from heads uptost,  
Their straining nostrils white with frost.  
Before our door the straggling train  
Drew up, an added team to gain.  
The elders threshed their hands a-cold,  
640 Passed, with the cider-mug, their jokes  
From lip to lip ; the younger folks  
Down the loose snow-banks, wrestling, rolled,  
Then toiled again the cavalcade  
O'er windy hill, through clogged ravine,  
645 And woodland paths that wound between  
Low drooping-pine-boughs winter-weighed.  
From every barn a team afoot,  
At every house a new recruit,  
Where, drawn by Nature's subtlest law,  
650 Haply the watchful young men saw  
Sweet doorway pictures of the curls

And curious eyes of merry girls,  
 Lifting their hands in mock defence  
 Against the snow-balls' compliments,  
 655 And reading in each missive tost  
 The charm which Eden never lost.

We heard once more the sleigh-bells' sound ;  
 And, following where the teamsters led,  
 The wise old Doctor went his round,  
 660 Just pausing at our door to say,  
 In the brief autocratic way  
 Of one who, prompt at Duty's call,  
 Was free to urge her claim on all,  
     That some poor neighbor sick abed  
 665 At night our poor mother's aid would need.  
 For, one in generous thought and deed,  
     What mattered in the sufferer's sight  
     The Quaker matron's inward light,  
     The Doctor's mail of Calvin's creed ?  
 670 All hearts confess the saints elect  
     Who, twain in faith, in love agree,  
 And melt not in an acid sect  
     The Christian pearl of charity !

So days went on : a week had passed  
 675 Since the great world was heard from last.  
 The Almanac we studied o'er,  
 Read and reread our little store  
 Of books and pamphlets, scarce a score ;  
 One harmless novel, mostly hid  
 680 From younger eyes, a book forbid,  
 And poetry, (or good or bad,

659. The *wise old Doctor* was Dr. Weld of Haverhill, an able man, who died at the age of ninety-six.



A single book was all we had,)
 Where Ellwood's meek, drab-skirted Muse,  
 A stranger to the heathen Nine,  
 685 Sang, with a somewhat nasal whine,  
 The wars of David and the Jews.  
 At last the floundering carrier bore  
 The village paper to our door.  
 Lo ! broadening outward as we read,  
 690 To warmer zones the horizon spread ;  
 In panoramic length unrolled  
 We saw the marvel that it told.  
 Before us passed the painted Creeks,  
 And daft McGregor on his raids  
 695 In Costa Rica's everglades.  
 And up Taygetus winding slow  
 Rode Ypsilanti's Mainote Greeks,  
 A Turk's head at each saddle bow !  
 Welcome to us its week-old news,  
 700 Its corner for the rustic Muse,  
 Its monthly gauge of snow and rain,

683. Thomas Ellwood, one of the Society of Friends, a contemporary and friend of Milton, and the suggester of *Paradise Regained*, wrote an epic poem in five books, called *Dauids*, the life of King David of Israel. He wrote the book, we are told, for his own diversion, so it was not necessary that others should be diverted by it. Ellwood's autobiography, a quaint and delightful book, may be found in Howells's series of *Choice Autobiographies*.

693. Referring to the removal of the Creek Indians from Georgia to beyond the Mississippi.

694. In 1822 Sir Gregor McGregor, a Scotchman, began an ineffectual attempt to establish a colony in Costa Rica.

697. Taygetus is a mountain on the Gulf of Messenia in Greece, and near by is the district of Maina, noted for its robbers and pirates. It was from these mountaineers that Ypsilanti, a Greek patriot, drew his cavalry in the struggle with Turkey which resulted in the independence of Greece.

Its record, mingling in a breath  
The wedding bell and dirge of death ;  
Jest, anecdote, and love-lorn tale,  
705 The latest culprit sent to jail ;  
Its hue and cry of stolen and lost,  
Its vendue sales and goods at cost,  
And traffic calling loud for gain.  
We felt the stir of hall and street,  
710 The pulse of life that round us beat ;  
The chill embargo of the snow  
Was melted in the genial glow ;  
Wide swung again our ice-locked door,  
And all the world was ours once more !

715 Clasp, Angel of the backward look  
And folded wings of ashen gray  
And voice of echoes far away,  
The brazen covers of thy book ;  
The weird palimpsest old and vast,  
720 Wherein thou hid'st the spectral past ;  
Where, closely mingling, pale and glow  
The characters of joy and woe ;  
The monographs of outlived years,  
Or smile-illumed or dim with tears,  
725 Green hills of life that slope to death,  
And haunts of home, whose vistaed trees  
Shade off to mournful cypresses  
With the white amaranths underneath.  
Even while I look, I can but heed  
730 The restless sands' incessant fall,  
Importunate hours that hours succeed,  
Each clamorous with its own sharp need,  
And duty keeping pace with all.  
Shut down and clasp the heavy lids ;

- 735 I hear again the voice that bids  
 The dreamer leave his dream midway  
 For larger hopes and graver fears :  
 Life greatens in these later years,  
 The century's aloe flowers to-day !
- 740 Yet, haply, in some lull of life,  
 Some Truce of God which breaks its strife,  
 The worldling's eyes shall gather dew,  
 Dreaming in throngful city ways  
 Of winter joys his boyhood knew ;
- 745 And dear and early friends — the few  
 Who yet remain — shall pause to view  
 These Flemish pictures of old days ;  
 Sit with me by the homestead hearth,  
 And stretch the hands of memory forth
- 750 To warm them at the wood-fire's blaze !  
 And thanks untraced to lips unknown  
 Shall greet me like the odors blown  
 From unseen meadows newly mown,  
 Or lilies floating in some pond,
- 755 Wood-fringed, the wayside gaze beyond ;  
 The traveller owns the grateful sense  
 Of sweetness near, he knows not whence,  
 And, pausing, takes with forehead bare  
 The benediction of the air.

741. The name is drawn from a historic compact in 1040, when the Church forbade the barons to make any attack on each other between sunset on Wednesday and sunrise on the following Monday, or upon any ecclesiastical fast or feast day. It also provided that no man was to molest a laborer working in the fields, or to lay hands on any implement of husbandry, on pain of excommunication.

747. The Flemish school of painting was chiefly occupied with homely interiors.

## II.

### AMONG THE HILLS.

#### PRELUDE.

ALONG the roadside, like the flowers of gold  
That tawny Incas for their gardens wrought,  
Heavy with sunshine droops the golden-rod,  
And the red pennons of the cardinal-flowers  
5 Hang motionless upon their upright staves.  
The sky is hot and hazy, and the wind,  
Wing-weary with its long flight from the south,  
Unfelt ; yet, closely scanned, yon maple leaf  
With faintest motion, as one stirs in dreams,  
10 Confesses it. The locust by the wall  
Stabs the noon-silence with his sharp alarm.  
A single hay-cart down the dusty road  
Creaks slowly, with its driver fast asleep  
On the load's top. Against the neighboring hill,  
15 Huddled along the stone wall's shady side,  
The sheep show white, as if a snowdrift still  
Defied the dog-star. Through the open door  
A drowsy smell of flowers — gray heliotrope,  
And white sweet clover, and shy mignonette —  
20 Comes faintly in, and silent chorus lends  
To the pervading symphony of peace.

2. The Incas were the kings of the ancient Peruvians. At Yucay, their favorite residence, the gardens, according to Prescott, contained "forms of vegetable life skilfully imitated in gold and silver." See *History of the Conquest of Peru*, i. 130.



No time is this for hands long over-worn  
 To task their strength : and (unto Him be praise  
 Who giveth quietness!) the stress and strain  
 25 Of years that did the work of centuries  
 Have ceased, and we can draw our breath once  
 more

Freely and full. So, as yon harvesters  
 Make glad their nooning underneath the elms  
 With tale and riddle and old snatch of song,  
 30 I lay aside grave themes, and idly turn  
 The leaves of memory's sketch-book, dreaming o'er  
 Old summer pictures of the quiet hills,  
 And human life, as quiet, at their feet.

And yet not idly all. A farmer's son,  
 35 Proud of field-lore and harvest craft; and feeling  
 All their fine possibilities, how rich  
 And restful even poverty and toil  
 Become when beauty, harmony, and love  
 Sit at their humble hearth as angels sat  
 40 At evening in the patriarch's tent, when man  
 Makes labor noble, and his farmer's frock  
 The symbol of a Christian chivalry,  
 Tender and just and generous to her  
 Who clothes with grace all duty; still, I know  
 45 Too well the picture has another side.  
 How wearily the grind of toil goes on  
 Where love is wanting, how the eye and ear  
 And heart are starved amidst the plenitude  
 Of nature, and how hard and colorless  
 50 Is life without an atmosphere. I look  
 Across the lapse of half a century,

26. The volume in which this poem stands first, and to which  
 it gives the name, was published in the fall of 1868.

And a call to mind old homesteads, where no flower  
Told that the spring had come, but evil weeds,  
Nightshade and rough-leaved burdock, in the place  
55 Of the sweet doorway greeting of the rose  
And honeysuckle, where the house walls seemed  
Blistering in sun, without a tree or vine  
To cast the tremulous shadow of its leaves  
Across the curtainless windows from whose panes  
60 Fluttered the signal rags of shiftlessness ;  
Within, the cluttered kitchen floor, unwashed  
(Broom-clean I think they called it) ; the best  
room  
Stifling with cellar damp, shut from the air  
In hot midsummer, bookless, pictureless  
65 Save the inevitable sampler hung  
Over the fireplace, or a mourning piece,  
A green-haired woman, peony-cheeked, beneath  
Impossible willows ; the wide-throated hearth  
Bristling with faded pine-boughs half concealing  
70 The piled-up rubbish at the chimney's back ;  
And, in sad keeping with all things about them,  
Shrill, querulous women, sour and sullen men,  
Untidy, loveless, old before their time,  
With scarce a human interest save their own  
75 Monotonous round of small economies,  
Or the poor scandal of the neighborhood ;  
Blind to the beauty everywhere revealed,  
Treading the May-flowers with regardless feet ;  
For them the song-sparrow and the bobolink  
80 Sang not, nor winds made music in the leaves ;  
For them in vain October's holocaust  
Burned, gold and crimson, over all the hills,  
The sacramental mystery of the woods.  
Church-goers, fearful of the unseen Powers,

85 But grumbling over pulpit-tax and pew-rent,  
 Saving, as shrewd economists, their souls  
 And winter pork with the least possible outlay  
 Of salt and sanctity ; in daily life  
 Showing as little actual comprehension  
 90 Of Christian charity and love and duty,  
 As if the Sermon on the Mount had been  
 Outdated like a last year's almanac :  
 Rich in broad woodlands and in half-tilled fields,  
 And yet so pinched and bare and comfortless,  
 95 The veriest straggler limping on his rounds,  
 The sun and air his sole inheritance,  
 Laughed at poverty that paid its taxes,  
 And hugged his rags in self-complacency !

Not such should be the homesteads of a land  
 100 Where whoso wisely wills and acts may dwell  
 As king and lawgiver, in broad-acred state,  
 With beauty, art, taste, culture, books, to make  
 His hour of leisure richer than a life  
 Of fourscore to the barons of old time ;  
 105 Our yeoman should be equal to his home,  
 Set in the fair, green valleys, purple walled,  
 A man to match his mountains, not to creep  
 Dwarfed and abased below them. I would fain  
 In this light way (of which I needs must own  
 110 With the knife-grinder of whom Canning sings,

110. The *Anti-Jacobin* was a periodical published in England in 1797-98, to ridicule democratic opinions, and in it Canning, who afterward became premier of England, wrote many light verses and *jeux d'esprit*, among them a humorous poem called the *Needy Knife-Grinder*, in burlesque of a poem by Southey. The knife-grinder is anxiously appealed to to tell his story of wrong and injustice, but answers as here :—

“ Story, God bless you ! I've none to tell.”

“Story, God bless you! I have none to tell you!”)  
Invite the eye to see and heart to feel  
The beauty and the joy within their reach,  
Home, and home loves, and the beatitudes  
115 Of nature free to all. Haply in years  
That wait to take the places of our own,  
Heard where some breezy balcony looks down  
On happy homes, or where the lake in the moon  
Sleeps dreaming of the mountains, fair as Ruth,  
120 In the old Hebrew pastoral, at the feet  
Of Boaz, even this simple lay of mine  
May seem the burden of a prophecy,  
Finding its late fulfilment in a change  
Slow as the oak’s growth, lifting manhood up  
125 Through broader culture, finer manners, love,  
And reverence, to the level of the hills.

O Golden Age, whose light is of the dawn,  
And not of sunset, forward, not behind,  
Flood the new heavens and earth, and with thee  
bring  
130 All the old virtues, whatsoever things  
Are pure and honest and of good repute,  
But add thereto whatever bard has sung  
Or seer has told of when in trance and dream  
They saw the Happy Isles of prophecy!  
135 Let Justice hold her scale, and Truth divide  
Between the right and wrong; but give the heart  
The freedom of its fair inheritance;

121. See Ruth iii.

134. The Fortunate Isles, or Isles of the Blest, were imaginary islands in the West, in classic mythology, set in a sea which was warmed by the rays of the declining sun. Hither the favorites of the gods were borne, and here they dwelt in endless joy.



Let the poor prisoner, cramped and starved so  
 long,  
 At Nature's table feast his ear and eye  
 140 With joy and wonder ; let all harmonies  
 Of sound, form, color, motion, wait upon  
 The princely guest, whether in soft attire  
 Of leisure clad, or the coarse frock of toil,  
 And, lending life to the dead form of faith,  
 145 Give human nature reverence for the sake  
 Of One who bore it, making it divine  
 With the ineffable tenderness of God ;  
 Let common need, the brotherhood of prayer,  
 The heirship of an unknown destiny,  
 150 The unsolved mystery round about us, make  
 A man more precious than the gold of Ophir.  
 Sacred, inviolate, unto whom all things  
 Should minister, as outward types and signs  
 Of the eternal beauty which fulfils  
 155 The one great purpose of creation, Love,  
 The sole necessity of Earth and Heaven !

AMONG THE HILLS.

For weeks the clouds had raked the hills  
 And vexed the vales with raining,  
 And all the woods were sad with mist,  
 160 And all the brooks complaining.

At last, a sudden night-storm tore  
 The mountain veils asunder,  
 And swept the valleys clean before  
 The besom of the thunder.

165 Through Sandwich Notch the west-wind sang  
    Good morrow to the cotter ;  
And once again Chocorua's horn  
    Of shadow pierced the water.

Above his broad lake Ossipee,  
170 Once more the sunshine wearing,  
Stooped, tracing on that silver shield  
    His grim armorial bearing.

Clear drawn against the hard blue sky  
    The peaks had winter's keenness ;  
175 And, close on autumn's frost, the vales  
    Had more than June's fresh greenness.

Again the sodden forest floors  
    With golden lights were checkered,  
Once more rejoicing leaves in wind  
180 And sunshine danced and flickered.

It was as if the summer's late  
    Atoning for its sadness  
Had borrowed every season's charm  
    To end its days in gladness.

185 I call to mind those banded vales  
    Of shadow and of shining,  
Through which, my hostess at my side,  
    I drove in day's declining.

165. Sandwich Notch, Chocorua Mountain, Ossipee Lake, and the Bearcamp River are all striking features of the scenery in that part of New Hampshire which lies just at the entrance of the White Mountain region. Many of Whittier's most graceful poems are drawn from the suggestions of this country, where he often spent the summer months, and a mountain near West Ossipee has received his name.

We held our sideling way above  
 190 The river's whitening shallows,  
 By homesteads old, with wide-flung barns  
 Swept through and through by swallows, —

By maple orchards, belts of pine  
 And larches climbing darkly  
 195 The mountain slopes, and, over all,  
 The great peaks rising starkly.

You should have seen that long hill-range  
 With gaps of brightness riven, —  
 How through each pass and hollow streamed  
 200 The purpling lights of heaven, —

Rivers of gold-mist flowing down  
 From far celestial fountains, —  
 The great sun flaming through the rifts  
 Beyond the wall of mountains!

205 We paused at last where home-bound cows  
 Brought down the pasture's treasure,  
 And in the barn the rhythmic flails  
 Beat out a harvest measure.

We heard the night hawk's sullen plunge,  
 210 The crow his tree-mates calling :  
 The shadows lengthening down the slopes  
 About our feet were falling,

And through them smote the level sun  
 In broken lines of splendor,  
 215 Touched the gray rocks and made the green  
 Of the shorn grass more tender.

The maples bending o'er the gate,  
Their arch of leaves just tinted  
With yellow warmth, the golden glow  
220 Of coming autumn hinted.

Keen white between the farm-house showed,  
And smiled on porch and trellis  
The fair democracy of flowers  
That equals cot and palace.

225 And weaving garlands for her dog,  
'Twixt chidings and caresses,  
A human flower of childhood shook  
The sunshine from her tresses.

On either hand we saw the signs  
230 Of fancy and of shrewdness,  
Where taste had wound its arms of vines  
Round thrift's uncomely rudeness.

The sun-brown farmer in his frock  
Shook hands, and called to Mary :  
235 Bare-armed, as Juno might, she came,  
White-aproned from her dairy.

Her air, her smile, her motions, told  
Of womanly completeness ;  
A music as of household songs  
240 Was in her voice of sweetness.

Not beautiful in curve and line  
But something more and better,  
The secret charm eluding art,  
Its spirit, not its letter ; —



245 An inborn grace that nothing lacked  
 Of culture or appliance, —  
 The warmth of genial courtesy,  
 The calm of self-reliance.

Before her queenly womanhood  
 250 How dared our hostess utter  
 The paltry errand of her need  
 To buy her fresh-churned butter?

She led the way with housewife pride,  
 Her goodly store disclosing,  
 255 Full tenderly the golden balls  
 With practised hands disposing.

Then, while along the western hills  
 We watched the changeful glory  
 Of sunset, on our homeward way,  
 260 I heard her simple story.

The early crickets sang; the stream  
 Plashed through my friend's narration:  
 Her rustic patois of the hills  
 Lost in my free translation.

265 "More wise," she said, "than those who swarm  
 Our hills in middle summer,  
 She came, when June's first roses blow,  
 To greet the early comer.

"From school and ball and rout she came,  
 270 The city's fair, pale daughter,  
 To drink the wine of mountain air  
 Beside the Bearcamp Water.

“ Her step grew firmer on the hills  
That watch our homesteads over ;  
275 On cheek and lip, from summer fields,  
She caught the bloom of clover.

“ For health comes sparkling in the streams  
From cool Chocorua stealing :  
There 's iron in our Northern winds ;  
280 Our pines are trees of healing.

“ She sat beneath the broad-armed elms  
That skirt the mowing-meadow,  
And watched the gentle west-wind weave  
The grass with shine and shadow.

285 “ Beside her, from the summer heat  
To share her grateful screening,  
With forehead bared, the farmer stood,  
Upon his pitchfork leaning.

“ Framed in its damp, dark locks, his face  
290 Had nothing mean or common, —  
Strong, manly, true, the tenderness  
And pride beloved of woman.

“ She looked up, glowing with the health  
The country air had brought her,  
295 And, laughing, said : ‘ You lack a wife,  
Your mother lacks a daughter.

“ ‘ To mend your frock and bake your bread  
You do not need a lady :  
Be sure among these brown old homes  
300 Is some one waiting ready, —

“ ‘Some fair, sweet girl, with skilful hand  
And cheerful heart for treasure,  
Who never played with ivory keys,  
Or danced the polka’s measure.’

305 “He bent his black brows to a frown,  
He set his white teeth tightly.  
‘ ’Tis well,’ he said, ‘for one like you  
To choose for me so lightly.

“ ‘You think, because my life is rude,  
310 I take no note of sweetness :  
I tell you love has naught to do  
With meetness or unmeetness.

“ ‘Itself its best excuse, it asks  
No leave of pride or fashion  
315 When silken zone or homespun frock  
It stirs with throbs of passion.

“ ‘You think me deaf and blind : you bring  
Your winning graces hither  
As free as if from cradle-time  
320 We two had played together.

“ ‘You tempt me with your laughing eyes,  
Your cheek of sundown’s blushes,  
A motion as of waving grain,  
A music as of thrushes.

325 “ ‘The plaything of your summer sport,  
The spells you weave around me  
You cannot at your will undo,  
Nor leave me as you found me.

“ ‘ You go as lightly as you came,  
330 Your life is well without me ;  
What care you that these hills will close  
Like prison-walls about me ?

“ ‘ No mood is mine to seek a wife,  
Or daughter for my mother :  
335 Who loves you loses in that love  
All power to love another !

“ ‘ I dare your pity or your scorn,  
With pride your own exceeding ;  
I fling my heart into your lap  
340 Without a word of pleading.’

“ She looked up in his face of pain,  
So archly, yet so tender :  
‘ And if I lend you mine,’ she said,  
‘ Will you forgive the lender ?

345 “ ‘ Nor frock nor tan can hide the man ;  
And see you not, my farmer,  
How weak and fond a woman waits  
Behind this silken armor ?

“ ‘ I love you : on that love alone,  
350 And not my worth, presuming,  
Will you not trust for summer fruit  
The tree in May-day blooming ? ’

“ Alone the hangbird overhead,  
His hair-swung cradle straining,  
355 Looked down to see love’s miracle, —  
The giving that is gaining



“ And so the farmer found a wife,  
His mother found a daughter :  
There looks no happier home than hers  
360 On pleasant Bearcamp Water.

“ Flowers spring to blossom where she walks  
The careful ways of duty ;  
Our hard, stiff lines of life with her  
Are flowing curves of beauty.

365 “ Our homes are cheerier for her sake,  
Our door-yards brighter blooming,  
And all about the social air  
Is sweeter for her coming.

“ Unspoken homilies of peace  
370 Her daily life is preaching ;  
The still refreshment of the dew  
Is her unconscious teaching.

“ And never tenderer hand than hers  
Unknits the brow of ailing ;  
375 Her garments to the sick man's ear  
Have music in their trailing.

“ And when, in pleasant harvest moons,  
The youthful huskers gather,  
Or sleigh-drives on the mountain ways  
380 Defy the winter weather, —

“ In sugar-camps, when south and warm  
The winds of March are blowing,  
And sweetly from its thawing veins  
The maple's blood is flowing, —

385 “ In summer, where some liliated pond  
Its virgin zone is baring,  
Or where the ruddy autumn fire  
Lights up the apple-paring, —

“ The coarseness of a ruder time  
390 Her finer mirth displaces,  
A subtler sense of pleasure fills  
Each rustic sport she graces.

“ Her presence lends its warmth and health  
To all who come before it.  
395 If woman lost us Eden, such  
As she alone restore it.

“ For larger life and wiser aims  
The farmer is her debtor ;  
Who holds to his another’s heart  
400 Must needs be worse or better.

“ Through her his civic service shows  
A purer-toned ambition ;  
No double consciousness divides  
The man and politician.

405 “ In party’s doubtful ways he trusts  
Her instincts to determine ;  
At the loud polls, the thought of her  
Recalls Christ’s Mountain Sermon.

“ He owns her logic of the heart,  
410 And wisdom of unreason,  
Supplying, while he doubts and weighs,  
The needed word in season.

“ He sees with pride her richer thought,  
Her fancy’s freer ranges ;  
415 And love thus deepened to respect  
Is proof against all changes.

“ And if she walks at ease in ways  
His feet are slow to travel,  
And if she reads with cultured eyes  
420 What his may scarce unravel,

“ Still clearer, for her keener sight  
Of beauty and of wonder,  
He learns the meaning of the hills  
He dwelt from childhood under.

425 “ And higher, warmed with summer lights,  
Or winter-crowned and hoary,  
The rigid horizon lifts for him  
Its inner veils of glory.

“ He has his own free, bookless lore,  
430 The lessons nature taught him,  
The wisdom which the woods and hills  
And toiling men have brought him :

“ The steady force of will whereby  
Her flexile grace seems sweeter ;  
435 The sturdy counterpoise which makes  
Her woman’s life completer :

“ A latent fire of soul which lacks  
No breath of love to fan it ;  
And wit, that, like his native brooks,  
440 Plays over solid granite.

“ How dwarfed against his manliness  
She sees the poor pretension,  
The wants, the aims, the follies, born  
Of fashion and convention !

445 “ How life behind its accidents  
Stands strong and self-sustaining,  
The human fact transcending all  
The losing and the gaining.

“ And so, in grateful interchange  
450 Of teacher and of hearer,  
Their lives their true distinctness keep  
While daily drawing nearer.

“ And if the husband or the wife  
In home's strong light discovers  
455 Such slight defaults as failed to meet  
The blinded eyes of lovers,

“ Why need we care to ask ? — who dreams  
Without their thorns of roses,  
Or wonders that the truest steel  
460 The readiest spark discloses ?

“ For still in mutual sufferance lies  
The secret of true living :  
Love scarce is love that never knows  
The sweetness of forgiving.

465 “ We send the Squire to General Court,  
He takes his young wife thither ;

465. The General Court is the official designation of the legislative body in New Hampshire and in Massachusetts.



No prouder man election day  
Rides through the sweet June weather.

“ He sees with eyes of manly trust  
470 All hearts to her inclining ;  
Not less for him his household light  
That others share its shining.”

Thus, while my hostess spake, there grew  
Before me, warmer tinted  
475 And outlined with a tenderer grace,  
The picture that she hinted.

The sunset smouldered as we drove  
Beneath the deep hill-shadows.  
Below us wreaths of white fog walked  
480 Like ghosts the haunted meadows.

Sounding the summer night, the stars  
Dropped down their golden plummets ;  
The pale arc of the Northern lights  
Rose o’er the mountain summits, —

485 Until, at last, beneath its bridge,  
We heard the Bearcamp flowing,  
And saw across the mapled lawn  
The welcome home-lights glowing ; —

And, musing on the tale I heard,  
490 ’T were well, thought I, if often  
To rugged farm-life came the gift  
To harmonize and soften ; —

If more and more we found the troth  
Of fact and fancy plighted,

495 And culture's charm and labor's strength  
In rural homes united, —

The simple life, the homely hearth,  
With beauty's sphere surrounding,  
And blessing toil where toil abounds  
500 With graces more abounding.

### III.

#### SONGS OF LABOR.

The *Songs of Labor* were written in 1845 and 1846, and printed first in magazines. They reflect the working life of New England at that time, before the great changes were wrought which have nearly put an end to some of the forms of labor, the praises of which here are sung. The *Songs* were collected into a volume, entitled *Songs of Labor and other Poems*, in 1850, and the following Dedication was then prefixed.

#### DEDICATION.

I WOULD the gift I offer here

Might grace from thy favor take,  
And, seen through Friendship's atmosphere,  
On softened lines and coloring, wear  
5 The unaccustomed light of beauty, for thy sake.

Few leaves of Fancy's spring remain :

But what I have I give to thee,  
The o'er-sunned bloom of summer's plain,  
And paler flowers, the latter rain  
10 Calls from the westering slope of life's autumnal  
lea.

Above the fallen groves of green,

Where youth's enchanted forest stood,  
Dry root and mossèd trunk between,  
A sober after-growth is seen,  
15 As springs the pine where falls the gay-leaved maple  
wood !

Yet birds will sing, and breezes play  
Their leaf-harps in the sombre tree ;  
And through the bleak and wintry day  
It keeps its steady green away, —  
20 So, even my after-thoughts may have a charm for  
thee.

Art's perfect forms no moral need,  
And beauty is its own excuse ;  
But for the dull and flowerless weed  
Some healing virtue still must plead,  
25 And the rough ore must find its honors in its use.

So haply these, my simple lays  
Of homely toil, may serve to show  
The orchard bloom and tasselled maize  
That skirt and gladden duty's ways,  
30 The unsung beauty hid life's common things below.

Haply from them the toiler, bent  
Above his forge or plough, may gain  
A manlier spirit of content,  
And feel that life is wisest spent  
35 Where the strong working hand makes strong the  
working brain.

The doom which to the guilty pair  
Without the walls of Eden came,  
Transforming sinless ease to care  
And rugged toil, no more shall bear  
40 The burden of old crime, or mark of primal shame.

22. "For the idea of this line," says Mr. Whittier, "I am indebted to Emerson in his inimitable sonnet to the Rhodora: —

" ' If eyes were made for seeing,  
Then Beauty is its own excuse for being.' "



A blessing now, a curse no more ;  
 Since He, whose name we breathe with awe,  
 The coarse mechanic vesture wore,  
 A poor man toiling with the poor,  
 45 In labor, as in prayer, fulfilling the same law.

## THE SHOEMAKERS.

Ho ! workers of the old time styled  
 The Gentle Craft of Leather !  
 Young brothers of the ancient guild,  
 Stand forth once more together !  
 50 Call out again your long array,  
 In the olden merry manner !  
 Once more, on gay St. Crispin's day,  
 Fling out your blazoned banner !

Rap, rap ! upon the well-worn stone  
 55 How falls the polished hammer !  
 Rap, rap ! the measured sound has grown  
 A quick and merry clamor.  
 Now shape the sole ! now deftly curl  
 The glossy vamp around it,  
 60 And bless the while the bright-eyed girl  
 Whose gentle fingers bound it !

For you, along the Spanish main  
 A hundred keels are ploughing ;

52. October 25. St. Crispin and his brother Crispinian were said to be martyrs of the third century who while preaching the gospel had made their living by shoemaking.

62. A name given to the northern coast of South America when it was taken possession of by the Spaniards.

For you, the Indian on the plain  
65 His lasso-coil is throwing ;  
For you, deep glens with hemlock dark  
The woodman's fire is lighting ;  
For you, upon the oak's gray bark,  
The woodman's axe is smiting.

70 For you, from Carolina's pine  
The rosin-gum is stealing ;  
For you, the dark-eyed Florentine  
Her silken skein is reeling ;  
For you, the dizzy goatherd roams  
75 His rugged Alpine ledges ;  
For you, round all her shepherd homes,  
Bloom England's thorny hedges.

The foremost still, by day or night,  
On moated mound or heather,  
80 Where'er the need of trampled right  
Brought toiling men together ;  
Where the free burghers from the wall  
Defied the mail-clad master,  
Than yours, at Freedom's trumpet-call,  
85 No craftsman rallied faster.

Let foplings sneer, let fools deride,  
Ye heed no idle scorner ;  
Free hands and hearts are still your pride,  
And duty done, your honor.  
90 Ye dare to trust, for honest fame,  
The jury Time empanels,

72. So associated was Florence, Italy, in the minds of people with the manufacture of sewing silk, that when the industry was set up in the neighborhood of Northampton, Mass., the factory village took the name of Florence.

And leave to truth each noble name  
Which glorifies your annals.

Thy songs, Hans Sachs, are living yet,  
95 In strong and hearty German ;  
And Bloomfield's lay, and Gifford's wit,  
And patriot fame of Sherman ;  
Still from his book, a mystic seer,  
The soul of Behmen teaches,  
100 And England's priestcraft shakes to hear  
Of Fox's leathern breeches.

The foot is yours ; where'er it falls,  
It treads your well-wrought leather  
On earthen floor, in marble halls,  
105 On carpet, or on heather.  
Still there the sweetest charm is found  
Of matron grace or vestal's,  
As Hebe's foot bore nectar round  
Among the old celestials !

110 Rap, rap ! your stout and rough brogan,  
With footsteps slow and weary,

94. See Longfellow's poem, *Nuremberg*, for a reference to Hans Sachs, the cobbler poet.

96. Robert Bloomfield, an English poet, author of *The Farmer's Boy*, was bred a shoemaker, as was William Gifford, a wit and satirist, and first editor of the *Quarterly Review*, but Gifford hated his craft bitterly.

97. Roger Sherman, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, was at one time a shoemaker in New Milford, Connecticut.

99. Jacob Behmen, or Boehme, a German visionary of the 17th century.

101. George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, or Quakers, as they are more commonly called.

May wander where the sky's blue span  
Shuts down upon the prairie.  
On Beauty's foot your slippers glance,  
115 By Saratoga's fountains,  
Or twinkle down the summer dance  
Beneath the Crystal Mountains!

The red brick to the mason's hand,  
The brown earth to the tiller's,  
120 The shoe in yours shall wealth command,  
Like fairy Cinderella's!  
As they who shunned the household maid  
Beheld the crown upon her,  
So all shall see your toil repaid  
125 With hearth and home and honor.

Then let the toast be freely quaffed,  
In water cool and brimming, —  
“All honor to the good old Craft,  
Its merry men and women!”  
130 Call out again your long array,  
In the old time's pleasant manner:  
Once more, on gay St. Crispin's day,  
Fling out his blazoned banner!

#### THE FISHERMEN.

HURRAH! the seaward breezes  
135 Sweep down the bay amain;  
Heave up, my lads, the anchor!  
Run up the sail again!

117. A name early given to the White Mountains from the crystals found there by the first explorers, who thought them diamonds.



Leave to the lubber landsmen  
The rail-car and the steed ;  
140 The stars of heaven shall guide us,  
The breath of heaven shall speed.

From the hill-top looks the steeple,  
And the light-house from the sand ;  
And the scattered pines are waving  
145 Their farewell from the land.  
One glance, my lads, behind us,  
For the homes we leave one sigh,  
Ere we take the change and chances  
Of the ocean and the sky.

150 Now, brothers, for the icebergs  
Of frozen Labrador,  
Floating spectral in the moonshine,  
Along the low, black shore !  
Where like snow the gannet's feathers  
155 On Brador's rocks are shed,  
And the noisy murr are flying,  
Like black scuds, overhead ;

Where in mist the rock is hiding,  
And the sharp reef lurks below,  
160 And the white squall smites in summer,  
And the autumn tempests blow ;  
Where through gray and rolling vapor,  
From evening unto morn,  
A thousand boats are hailing,  
165 Horn answering unto horn.

Hurrah ! for the Red Island,  
With the white cross on its crown !

Hurrah ! for Meccatina,  
And its mountains bare and brown !  
170 Where the Caribou's tall antlers  
O'er the dwarf-wood freely toss,  
And the footstep of the Mickmack  
Has no sound upon the moss.

There we 'll drop our lines, and gather  
175 Old Ocean's treasures in,  
Where'er the mottled mackerel  
Turns up a steel-dark fin.  
The sea 's our field of harvest,  
Its scaly tribes our grain ;  
180 We 'll reap the teeming waters  
As at home they reap the plain !

Our wet hands spread the carpet,  
And light the hearth of home ;  
From our fish, as in the old time,  
185 The silver coin shall come.  
As the demon fled the chamber  
Where the fish of Tobit lay,  
So ours from all our dwellings  
Shall frighten Want away.

190 Though the mist upon our jackets  
In the bitter air congeals,  
And our lines wind stiff and slowly  
From off the frozen reels ;  
Though the fog be dark around us,  
195 And the storm blow high and loud,  
We will whistle down the wild wind,  
And laugh beneath the cloud !

187. See the story in the *Book of Tobit*, one of the *Apocrypha*.

In the darkness as in daylight,  
On the water as on land,  
200 God's eye is looking on us,  
And beneath us is His hand!  
Death will find us soon or later,  
On the deck or in the cot;  
And we cannot meet him better  
205 Than in working out our lot.

Hurrah! hurrah! the west-wind  
Comes freshening down the bay,  
The rising sails are filling;  
Give way, my lads, give way!  
210 Leave the coward landsman clinging  
To the dull earth, like a weed;  
The stars of heaven shall guide us,  
The breath of heaven shall speed!

## THE LUMBERMEN.

WILDLY round our woodland quarters  
215 Sad-voiced Autumn grieves;  
Thickly down these swelling waters  
Float his fallen leaves.  
Through the tall and naked timber,  
Column-like and old,  
220 Glean the sunsets of November,  
From their skies of gold.

O'er us, to the southland heading,  
Screams the gray wild-goose;  
On the night-frost sounds the treading  
225 Of the brindled moose.

Noiseless creeping, while we 're sleeping,  
Frost his task-work plies ;  
Soon, his icy bridges heaping,  
Shall our log-piles rise,

230 When, with sounds of smothered thunder,  
On some night of rain,  
Lake and river break asunder  
Winter's weakened chain,  
Down the wild March flood shall bear them  
235 To the saw-mill's wheel,  
Or where Steam, the slave, shall tear them  
With his teeth of steel.

Be it starlight, be it moonlight,  
In these vales below,  
240 When the earliest beams of sunlight  
Streak the mountain's snow,  
Crisps the hoar-frost, keen and early,  
To our hurrying feet,  
And the forest echoes clearly  
245 All our blows repeat.

Where the crystal Ambijejis  
Stretches broad and clear,  
And Millnocket's pine-black ridges  
Hide the browsing deer ;  
250 Where, through lakes and wide morasses,  
Or through rocky walls,  
Swift and strong, Penobscot passes  
White with foamy falls ;

Where, through clouds, are glimpses given  
255 Of Katahdin's sides, —



Rock and forest piled to heaven,  
Torn and ploughed by slides!  
Far below, the Indian trapping,  
In the sunshine warm;  
260 Far above, the snow-cloud wrapping  
Half the peak in storm!

Where are mossy carpets better  
Than the Persian weaves,  
And than Eastern perfumes sweeter  
265 Seem the fading leaves;  
And a music wild and solemn,  
From the pine-tree's height,  
Rolls its vast and sea-like volume  
On the wind of night;

270 Make we here our camp of winter;  
And, through sleet and snow,  
Pitchy knot and beechen splinter  
On our hearth shall glow.  
Here, with mirth to lighten duty,  
275 We shall lack alone  
Woman's smile and girlhood's beauty,  
Childhood's lisping tone.

But their hearth is brighter burning  
For our toil to-day;  
280 And the welcome of returning  
Shall our loss repay,  
When, like seamen from the waters,  
From the woods we come,  
Greeting sisters, wives, and daughters,  
285 Angels of our home!

Not for us the measured ringing  
From the village spire,  
Not for us the Sabbath singing  
Of the sweet-voiced choir ;  
290 Ours the old, majestic temple,  
Where God's brightness shines  
Down the dome so grand and ample,  
Propped by lofty pines !

Through each branch-enwoven skylight,  
295 Speaks He in the breeze,  
As of old beneath the twilight  
Of lost Eden's trees !  
For His ear, the inward feeling  
Needs no outward tongue ;  
300 He can see the spirit kneeling  
While the axe is swung.

Heeding truth alone, and turning  
From the false and dim,  
Lamp of toil or altar burning  
305 Are alike to Him.  
Strike, then, comrades ! Trade is waiting  
On our rugged toil ;  
Far ships waiting for the freighting  
Of our woodland spoil !

310 Ships, whose traffic links these highlands,  
Bleak and cold, of ours,  
With the citron-planted islands  
Of a clime of flowers ;  
To our frosts the tribute bringing  
315 Of eternal heats ;

In our lap of winter flinging  
Tropic fruits and sweets.

Cheerly, on the axe of labor,  
Let the sunbeams dance,  
320 Better than the flash of sabre  
Or the gleam of lance!  
Strike! With every blow is given  
Freer sun and sky,  
And the long-hid earth to heaven  
325 Looks, with wondering eye!

Loud behind us grow the murmurs  
Of the age to come;  
Clang of smiths, and tread of farmers,  
Bearing harvest home!  
330 Here her virgin lap with treasures  
Shall the green earth fill;  
Waving wheat and golden maize-ears  
Crown each beechen hill.

Keep who will the city's alleys,  
335 Take the smooth-shorn plain;  
Give to us the cedarn valleys,  
Rocks and hills of Maine!  
In our North-land, wild and woody,  
Let us still have part;  
340 Rugged nurse and mother sturdy,  
Hold us to thy heart!

Oh, our free hearts beat the warmer  
For thy breath of snow;  
And our tread is all the firmer  
345 For thy rocks below.

Freedom, hand in hand with labor,  
Walketh strong and brave ;  
On the forehead of his neighbor  
No man writeth Slave !

350 Lo, the day breaks ! old Katahdin's  
Pine-trees show its fires,  
While from these dim forest gardens  
Rise their blackened spires.  
Up, my comrades ! up and doing !  
355 Manhood's rugged play  
Still renewing, bravely hewing  
Through the world our way !

#### THE SHIP-BUILDERS.

THE sky is ruddy in the east,  
The earth is gray below,  
360 And, spectral in the river-mist,  
The ship's white timbers show.  
Then let the sounds of measured stroke  
And grating saw begin ;  
The broad-axe to the gnarlèd oak,  
365 The mallet to the pin !

Hark ! roars the bellows, blast on blast,  
The sooty smithy jars,  
And fire-sparks, rising far and fast,  
Are fading with the stars.  
370 All day for us the smith shall stand  
Beside that flashing forge ;  
All day for us his heavy hand  
The groaning anvil scourge.



From far-off hills, the panting team  
375 For us is toiling near ;  
For us the raftsmen down the stream  
Their island barges steer.  
Rings out for us the axe-man's stroke  
In forests old and still ;  
380 For us the century-circled oak  
Falls crashing down his hill.

Up! up! in nobler toil than ours  
No craftsmen bear a part :  
We make of Nature's giant powers  
385 The slaves of human Art.  
Lay rib to rib and beam to beam,  
And drive the treenails free ;  
Nor faithless joint nor yawning seam  
Shall tempt the searching sea !

390 Where'er the keel of our good ship  
The sea's rough field shall plough ;  
Where'er her tossing spars shall drip  
With salt-spray caught below ;  
That ship must heed her master's beck,  
395 Her helm obey his hand,  
And seamen tread her reeling deck  
As if they trod the land.

Her oaken ribs the vulture-beak  
Of Northern ice may peel ;  
400 The sunken rock and coral peak  
May grate along her keel ;  
And know we well the painted shell  
We give to wind and wave,  
Must float, the sailor's citadel,  
405 Or sink, the sailor's grave !

Ho! strike away the bars and blocks,  
And set the good ship free!  
Why lingers on these dusty rocks  
The young bride of the sea?  
410 Look! how she moves adown the grooves,  
In graceful beauty now!  
How lowly on the breast she loves  
Sinks down her virgin prow!

God bless her! wheresoe'er the breeze  
415 Her snowy wing shall fan,  
Aside the frozen Hebrides  
Or sultry Hindostan!  
Where'er, in mart or on the main,  
With peaceful flag unfurled,  
420 She helps to wind the silken chain  
Of commerce round the world!

Speed on the ship! But let her bear  
No merchandise of sin,  
No groaning cargo of despair  
425 Her roomy hold within;  
No Lethean drug for Eastern lands,  
Nor poison-draught for ours;  
But honest fruits of toiling hands  
And Nature's sun and showers.

430 Be hers the Prairie's golden grain,  
The Desert's golden sand,  
The clustered fruits of sunny Spain,  
The spice of Morning-land!  
Her pathway on the open main  
435 May blessings follow free,  
And glad hearts welcome back again  
Her white sails from the sea!

## THE DROVERS.

THROUGH heat and cold, and shower and sun,  
Still onward cheerily driving!  
440 There's life alone in duty done,  
And rest alone in striving.  
But see! the day is closing cool,  
The woods are dim before us;  
The white fog of the wayside pool  
445 Is creeping slowly o'er us.

The night is falling, comrades mine,  
Our footsore beasts are weary,  
And through yon elms the tavern sign  
Looks out upon us cheery.  
450 The landlord beckons from his door,  
His beechen fire is glowing;  
These ample barns, with feed in store,  
Are filled to overflowing.

From many a valley frowned across  
455 By brows of rugged mountains;  
From hillsides where, through spongy moss,  
Gush out the river fountains;  
From quiet farm-fields, green and low,  
And bright with blooming clover;  
460 From vales of corn the wandering crow  
No richer hovers over, —

Day after day our way has been  
O'er many a hill and hollow;  
By lake and stream, by wood and glen,  
465 Our stately drove we follow.

Through dust-clouds rising thick and dun  
As smoke of battle o'er us,  
Their white horns glisten in the sun,  
Like plumes and crests before us.

470 We see them slowly climb the hill,  
As slow behind it sinking ;  
Or, thronging close, from roadside rill,  
Or sunny lakelet, drinking.  
Now crowding in the narrow road,  
475 In thick and struggling masses,  
They glare upon the teamster's load,  
Or rattling coach that passes.

Anon, with toss of horn and tail,  
And paw of hoof, and bellow,  
480 They leap some farmer's broken pale,  
O'er meadow-close or fallow.  
Forth comes the startled goodman ; forth  
Wife, children, house-dog sally,  
Till once more on their dusty path  
485 The baffled truants rally.

We drive no starvelings, scraggy grown,  
Loose-legged, and ribbed and bony,  
Like those who grind their noses down  
On pastures bare and stony, —  
490 Lank oxen, rough as Indian dogs,  
And cows too lean for shadows,  
Disputing feebly with the frogs  
The crop of saw-grass meadows !

In our good drove, so sleek and fair,  
495 No bones of leanness rattle,



No tottering hide-bound ghosts are there,  
Or Pharaoh's evil cattle.  
Each stately beeve bespeaks the hand  
That fed him unrepining ;  
500 The fatness of a goodly land  
In each dun hide is shining.

We 've sought them where, in warmest nooks,  
The freshest feed is growing,  
By sweetest springs and clearest brooks  
505 Through honeysuckle flowing ;  
Wherever hillsides, sloping south,  
Are bright with early grasses,  
Or, tracking green the lowland's drouth,  
The mountain streamlet passes.

510 But now the day is closing cool,  
The woods are dim before us,  
The white fog of the wayside pool  
Is creeping slowly o'er us.  
The cricket to the frog's bassoon  
515 His shrillest time is keeping ;  
The sickle of yon setting moon  
The meadow-mist is reaping.

The night is falling, comrades mine,  
Our footsore beasts are weary,  
520 And through yon elms the tavern sign  
Looks out upon us cheery.  
To-morrow, eastward with our charge  
We 'll go to meet the dawning,  
Ere yet the pines of Kearsarge  
525 Have seen the sun of morning.

When snow-flakes o'er the frozen earth,  
Instead of birds, are flitting ;  
When children throng the glowing hearth,  
And quiet wives are knitting ;  
530 While in the firelight strong and clear  
Young eyes of pleasure glisten,  
To tales of all we see and hear  
The ears of home shall listen.

By many a Northern lake and hill,  
535 From many a mountain pasture,  
Shall fancy play the Drover still,  
And speed the long night faster.  
Then let us on, through shower and sun,  
And heat and cold, be driving ;  
540 There 's life alone in duty done,  
And rest alone in striving.

## THE HUSKERS.

It was late in mild October, and the long autumnal  
rain  
Had left the summer harvest-fields all green with  
grass again ;  
The first sharp frost had fallen, leaving all the  
woodlands gay  
545 With the hues of summer's rainbow, or the meadow-  
flowers of May.

Through a thin, dry mist, that morning, the sun rose  
broad and red,  
At first a rayless disk of fire, he brightened as he  
sped ;

Yet, even his noontide glory fell chastened and  
subdued,

On the cornfields and the orchards, and softly pic-  
tured wood.

550 And all that quiet afternoon, slow sloping to the  
night,

He wove with golden shuttle the haze with yellow  
light;

Slanting through the painted beeches, he glorified  
the hill;

And, beneath it, pond and meadow lay brighter,  
greener still.

And shouting boys in woodland haunts caught  
glimpses of that sky,

555 Flecked by the many-tinted leaves, and laughed,  
they knew not why,

And school-girls gay with aster-flowers, beside the  
meadow brooks,

Mingled the glow of autumn with the sunshine of  
sweet looks.

From spire and barn looked westerly the patient  
weathercocks;

But even the birches on the hill stood motionless  
as rocks.

560 No sound was in the woodlands, save the squirrel's  
dropping shell,

And the yellow leaves among the boughs, low rus-  
tling as they fell.

The summer grains were harvested; the stubble-  
fields lay dry,

Where June winds rolled, in light and shade, the  
pale green waves of rye ;  
But still, on gentle hill-slopes, in valleys fringed  
with wood,  
565 Ungathered, bleaching in the sun, the heavy corn  
crop stood.

Bent low, by autumn's wind and rain, through husks  
that, dry and sere,  
Unfolded from their ripened charge, shone out the  
yellow ear ;  
Beneath, the turnip lay concealed, in many a verdant  
fold,  
And glistened in the slanting light the pumpkin's  
sphere of gold.

570 There wrought the busy harvesters ; and many a  
creaking wain  
Bore slowly to the long barn-floor its load of husk  
and grain ;  
Till broad and red, as when he rose, the sun sank  
down, at last,  
And like a merry guest's farewell, the day in brightness  
passed.

And lo ! as through the western pines, on meadow,  
stream, and pond,  
575 Flamed the red radiance of a sky, set all afire beyond,  
Slowly o'er the eastern sea-bluffs a milder glory  
shone,  
And the sunset and the moonrise were mingled into  
one !



As thus into the quiet night the twilight lapsed  
away,  
And deeper in the brightening moon the tranquil  
shadows lay ;  
580 From many a brown old farm-house, and hamlet  
without name,  
Their milking and their home-tasks done, the merry  
huskers came.

Swung o'er the heaped-up harvest, from pitchforks  
in the mow,  
Shone dimly down the lanterns on the pleasant  
scene below ;  
The growing pile of husks behind, the golden ears  
before,  
585 And laughing eyes and busy hands and brown  
cheeks glimmering o'er.

Half hidden, in a quiet nook, serene of look and  
heart,  
Talking their old times over, the old men sat apart ;  
While up and down the unhusked pile, or nestling  
in its shade,  
At hide-and-seek, with laugh and shout, the happy  
children played.

590 Urged by the good host's daughter, a maiden young  
and fair,  
Lifting to light her sweet blue eyes and pride of  
soft brown hair,  
The master of the village school, sleek of hair and  
smooth of tongue,  
To the quaint tune of some old psalm, a husking-  
ballad sung.

## THE CORN-SONG.

HEAP high the farmer's wintry hoard!

595   Heap high the golden corn!

No richer gift has Autumn poured  
From out her lavish horn!

Let other lands, exulting, glean

The apple from the pine,

600 The orange from its glossy green,  
The cluster from the vine;

We better love the hardy gift

Our rugged vales bestow,

To cheer us when the storm shall drift

605   Our harvest-fields with snow.

Through vales of grass and meads of flowers

Our ploughs their furrows made,

While on the hills the sun and showers

Of changeful April played.

610 We dropped the seed o'er hill and plain

Beneath the sun of May,

And frightened from our sprouting grain

The robber crows away.

All through the long, bright days of June

615   Its leaves grew green and fair,

And waved in hot midsummer's noon

Its soft and yellow hair.

And now, with Autumn's moonlit eves,

Its harvest-time has come,

620 We pluck away the frosted leaves,  
And bear the treasure home.

There, when the snows about us drift,  
And winter winds are cold,  
Fair hands the broken grain shall sift,  
625 And knead its meal of gold.

Let vapid idlers loll in silk  
Around their costly board ;  
Give us the bowl of samp and milk,  
By homespun beauty poured !

630 Where'er the wide old kitchen hearth  
Sends up its smoky curls,  
Who will not thank the kindly earth,  
And bless our farmer girls !

Then shame on all the proud and vain,  
635 Whose folly laughs to scorn  
The blessing of our hardy grain,  
Our wealth of golden corn !

Let earth withhold her goodly root,  
Let mildew blight the rye,  
640 Give to the worm the orchard's fruit,  
The wheat-field to the fly :

But let the good old crop adorn  
The hills our fathers trod ;  
Still let us, for His golden corn,  
645 Send up our thanks to God !

#### IV.

#### SELECTED POEMS.

#### THE BAREFOOT BOY.

BLESSINGS on thee, little man,  
Barefoot boy, with cheek of tan !  
With thy turned-up pantaloons,  
And thy merry whistled tunes ;  
5 With thy red lip, redder still  
Kissed by strawberries on the hill ;  
With the sunshine on thy face,  
Through thy torn brim's jaunty grace ;  
From my heart I give thee joy, —  
10 I was once a barefoot boy !  
Prince thou art, — the grown-up man  
Only is republican.  
Let the million-dollared ride !  
Barefoot, trudging at his side,  
15 Thou hast more than he can buy  
In the reach of ear and eye, —  
Outward sunshine, inward joy :  
Blessings on thee, barefoot boy !

Oh for boyhood's painless play,  
20 Sleep that wakes in laughing day,  
Health that mocks the doctor's rules,  
Knowledge never learned of schools,



- Of the wild bee's morning chase,  
Of the wild-flower's time and place,  
25 Flight of fowl and habitude  
Of the tenants of the wood ;  
How the tortoise bears his shell,  
How the woodchuck digs his cell,  
And the ground-mole sinks his well ;  
30 How the robin feeds her young,  
How the oriole's nest is hung ;  
Where the whitest lilies blow,  
Where the freshest berries grow,  
Where the ground-nut trails its vine,  
35 Where the wood-grape's clusters shine ;  
Of the black wasp's cunning way,  
Mason of his walls of clay,  
And the architectural plans  
Of gray hornet artisans !  
40 For, eschewing books and tasks,  
Nature answers all he asks ;  
Hand in hand with her he walks,  
Face to face with her he talks,  
Part and parcel of her joy,—  
45 Blessings on the barefoot boy !

- Oh for boyhood's time of June,  
Crowding years in one brief moon,  
When all things I heard or saw,  
Me, their master, waited for.  
50 I was rich in flowers and trees,  
Humming-birds and honey-bees ;  
For my sport the squirrel played,  
Plied the snouted mole his spade ;  
For my taste the blackberry cone  
55 Purpled over hedge and stone ;

Laughed the brook for my delight  
Through the day and through the night,  
Whispering at the garden wall,  
Talked with me from fall to fall ;  
60 Mine the sand-rimmed pickerel pond,  
Mine the walnut slopes beyond,  
Mine, on bending orchard trees,  
Apples of Hesperides !  
Still as my horizon grew,  
65 Larger grew my riches too ;  
All the world I saw or knew  
Seemed a complex Chinese toy,  
Fashioned for a barefoot boy !

Oh for festal dainties spread,  
70 Like my bowl of milk and bread ;  
Pewter spoon and bowl of wood,  
On the door-stone, gray and rude !  
O'er me, like a regal tent,  
Cloudy-ribbed, the sunset bent,  
75 Purple-curtained, fringed with gold,  
Looped in many a wind-swung fold,  
While for music came the play  
Of the pied frogs' orchestra ;  
And, to light the noisy choir,  
80 Lit the fly his lamp of fire.  
I was monarch : pomp and joy  
Waited on the barefoot boy !

Cheerily, then, my little man,  
Live and laugh, as boyhood can !

63. The Hesperides were three nymphs who were set to guard the golden apples which Gæa (Earth) planted in the gardens of Here, as a wedding gift.

- 35 Though the flinty slopes be hard,  
 Stubble-speared the new-mown sward,  
 Every morn shall lead thee through  
 Fresh baptisms of the dew ;  
 Every evening from thy feet  
 90 Shall the cool wind kiss the heat :  
 All too soon these feet must hide  
 In the prison cells of pride,  
 Lose the freedom of the sod,  
 Like a colt's for work be shod,  
 95 Made to tread the mills of toil,  
 Up and down in ceaseless moil :  
 Happy if their track be found  
 Never on forbidden ground ;  
 Happy if they sink not in  
 100 Quick and treacherous sands of sin.  
 Ah ! that thou couldst know thy joy,  
 Ere it passes, barefoot boy !

## HOW THE ROBIN CAME.

## AN ALGONQUIN LEGEND.

- HAPPY young friends, sit by me,  
 Under May's blown apple-tree,  
 While these home-birds in and out  
 Through the blossoms flit about.  
 5 Hear a story, strange and old,  
 By the wild red Indians told,  
 How the robin came to be :  
 Once a great chief left his son, —  
 Well-beloved, his only one, —  
 10 When the boy was well-nigh grown,  
 In the trial-lodge alone.

Left for tortures long and slow  
Youths like him must undergo,  
Who their pride of manhood test,  
15 Lacking water, food, and rest.

Seven days the fast he kept,  
Seven nights he never slept.  
Then the young boy, wrung with pain,  
Weak from nature's overstrain,  
20 Faltering, moaned a low complaint :  
" Spare, me, father, for I faint ! "  
But the chieftain, haughty-eyed,  
Hid his pity in his pride.  
" You shall be a hunter good,  
25 Knowing never lack of food :  
You shall be a warrior great,  
Wise as fox and strong as bear ;  
Many scalps your belt shall wear,  
If with patient heart you wait  
30 Bravely till your task is done.  
Better you should starving die  
Than that boy and squaw should cry  
Shame upon your father's son ! "

When next morn the sun's first rays  
35 Glistened on the hemlock sprays,  
Straight that lodge the old chief sought,  
And boiled samp and moose meat brought.  
" Rise and eat, my son ! " he said.  
Lo, he found the poor boy dead !  
40 As with grief his grave they made,  
And his bow beside him laid,  
Pipe, and knife, and wampum-braid,  
On the lodge-top overhead,



Preening smooth its breast of red  
45 And the brown coat that it wore,  
Sat a bird, unknown before.  
And as if with human tongue,  
“Mourn me not,” it said, or sung :  
“I, a bird, am still your son,  
50 Happier than if hunter fleet,  
Or a brave, before your feet  
Laying scalps in battle won.  
Friend of man, my song shall cheer  
Lodge and corn-land ; hovering near,  
55 To each wigwam I shall bring  
Tidings of the coming spring ;  
Every child my voice shall know  
In the moon of melting snow,  
When the maple’s red bud swells,  
60 And the wind-flower lifts its bells.  
As their fond companion  
Men shall henceforth own your son,  
And my song shall testify  
That of human kin am I.”

65 Thus the Indian legend saith  
How, at first, the robin came  
With a sweeter life and death,  
Bird for boy, and still the same.  
If my young friends doubt that this  
70 Is the robin’s genesis,  
Not in vain is still the myth  
If a truth be found therewith :  
Unto gentleness belong  
Gifts unknown to pride and wrong ;  
75 Happier far than hate is praise, —  
He who sings than he who slays.

## TELLING THE BEES.

A remarkable custom, brought from the Old Country, formerly prevailed in the rural districts of New England. On the death of a member of the family, the bees were at once informed of the event, and their hives were dressed in mourning. This ceremonial was supposed to be necessary to prevent the swarms from leaving their hives and seeking a new home. The scene is minutely that of the Whittier homestead.

HERE is the place ; right over the hill  
Runs the path I took ;  
You can see the gap in the old wall still,  
And the stepping-stones in the shallow brook.

5 There is the house, with the gate red-barred,  
And the poplars tall ;  
And the barn's brown length, and the cattle-yard,  
And the white horns tossing above the wall.

There are the beehives ranged in the sun ;  
10 And down by the brink  
Of the brook are her poor flowers, weed o'errun,  
Pansy and daffodil, rose and pink.

A year has gone, as the tortoise goes,  
Heavy and slow ;  
15 And the same rose blows, and the same sun glows,  
And the same brook sings of a year ago.

There 's the same sweet clover-smell in the breeze ;  
And the June sun warm  
Tangles his wings of fire in the trees,  
20 Setting, as then, over Fernside farm.

I mind me how with a lover's care  
From my Sunday coat  
I brushed off the burrs, and smoothed my hair,  
And cooled at the brookside my brow and throat.

25 Since we parted, a month had passed, —  
To love, a year ;  
Down through the beeches I looked at last  
On the little red gate and the well-sweep near.

I can see it all now, — the slantwise rain  
30 Of light through the leaves,  
The sundown's blaze on her window-pane,  
The bloom of her roses under the eaves.

Just the same as a month before, —  
The house and the trees,  
35 The barn's brown gable, the vine by the door, —  
Nothing changed but the hive of bees.

Before them, under the garden wall,  
Forward and back,  
Went drearily singing the chore-girl small,  
40 Draping each hive with a shred of black.

Trembling, I listened : the summer sun  
Had the chill of snow ;  
For I knew she was telling the bees of one  
Gone on the journey we all must go !

45 Then I said to myself, " My Mary weeps  
For the dead to-day :  
Haply her blind grandsire sleeps  
The fret and the pain of his age away."

But her dog whined low ; on the doorway sill,  
50 With his cane to his chin,  
The old man sat ; and the chore-girl still  
Sung to the bees stealing out and in.

And the song she was singing ever since  
In my ear sounds on : —  
55 “ Stay at home, pretty bees, fly not hence !  
Mistress Mary is dead and gone ! ”

## SWEET FERN.

THE subtle power in perfume found  
Nor priest nor sibyl vainly learned ;  
On Grecian shrine or Aztec mound  
No censer idly burned.

5 That power the old-time worships knew,  
The Corybantes' frenzied dance,  
The Pythian priestess swooning through  
The wonderland of trance.

And Nature holds, in wood and field,  
10 Her thousand sunlit censers still ;  
To spells of flower and shrub we yield  
Against or with our will.

I climbed a hill path strange and new  
With slow feet, pausing at each turn ;

6. The Corybantes were priests of Rhea, or Cybele, the great mother of the gods, worshipped in Phrygia. In their solemn festivals they displayed extravagant fury in dancing.

7. The priestess of the Delphic oracle uttered her prophecies while in an ecstasy.



15 A sudden waft of west wind blew  
The breath of the sweet fern.

That fragrance from my vision swept  
The alien landscape ; in its stead,  
Up fairer hills of youth I stepped,  
20 As light of heart as tread.

I saw my boyhood's lakelet shine  
Once more through rifts of woodland shade ;  
I knew my river's winding line  
By morning mist betrayed.

25 With me June's freshness, lapsing brook,  
Murmurs of leaf and bee, the call  
Of birds, and one in voice and look  
In keeping with them all.

A fern beside the way we went  
30 She plucked, and, smiling, held it up,  
While from her hand the wild, sweet scent  
I drank as from a cup.

O potent witchery of smell !  
The dust-dry leaves to life return,  
35 And she who plucked them owns the spell  
And lifts her ghostly fern.

Or sense or spirit ? Who shall say  
What touch the chord of memory thrills ?  
It passed, and left the August day  
40 Ablaze on lonely hills.

## THE POOR VOTER ON ELECTION DAY.

THE proudest now is but my peer,  
The highest not more high ;  
To-day, of all the weary year,  
A king of men am I.

5 To-day alike are great and small,  
The nameless and the known ;  
My palace is the people's hall,  
The ballot-box my throne !

Who serves to-day upon the list  
10 Beside the served shall stand ;  
Alike the brown and wrinkled fist,  
The gloved and dainty hand !  
The rich is level with the poor,  
The weak is strong to-day ;  
15 And sleekest broadcloth counts no more  
Than homespun frock of gray.

To-day let pomp and vain pretence  
My stubborn right abide ;  
I set a plain man's common sense  
20 Against the pedant's pride.  
To-day shall simple manhood try  
The strength of gold and land ;  
The wide world has not wealth to buy  
The power in my right hand !

25 While there's a grief to seek redress,  
Or balance to adjust,  
Where weighs our living manhood less  
Than Mammon's vilest dust, —

While there 's a right to need my vote,  
 30 A wrong to sweep away,  
 Up! clouted knee and ragged coat!  
 A man 's a man to-day!

## THE HILL-TOP.

THE burly driver at my side,  
 We slowly climbed the hill,  
 Whose summit, in the hot noontide,  
 Seemed rising, rising still.  
 5 At last, our short noon-shadows hid  
 The top-stone, bare and brown,  
 From whence, like Gizeh's pyramid,  
 The rough mass slanted down.  
  
 I felt the cool breath of the North ;  
 10 Between me and the sun,  
 O'er deep, still lake, and ridgy earth,  
 I saw the cloud-shades run.  
 Before me, stretched for glistening miles,  
 Lay mountain-girdled Squam ;  
 15 Like green-winged birds, the leafy isles  
 Upon its bosom swam.

And, glimmering through the sun-haze warm,  
 Far as the eye could roam,  
 Dark billows of an earthquake storm  
 20 Beflecked with clouds like foam,  
 Their vales in misty shadow deep,  
 Their rugged peaks in shine,

7. Gizeh's pyramid is one of the great pyramids on the banks of the Nile, near Cairo.

14. Squam or Asquam lake, at the base of the White Hills.

I saw the mountain ranges sweep  
The horizon's northern line.

25 There towered Chocorua's peak ; and west  
Moosehillock's woods were seen,  
With many a nameless slide-scarred crest  
And pine-dark gorge between.  
Beyond them, like a sun-rimmed cloud,  
30 The great Notch mountains shone,  
Watched over by the solemn-browed  
And awful face of stone !

" A good look-off ! " the driver spake ;  
" About this time last year,  
35 I drove a party to the Lake,  
And stopped, at evening, here.  
'T was duskish down below ; but all  
These hills stood in the sun,  
Till, dipped behind yon purple wall,  
40 He left them, one by one.

" A lady, who, from Thornton hill,  
Had held her place outside,  
And, as a pleasant woman will,  
Had cheered the long, dull ride,  
45 Besought me, with so sweet a smile,  
That — though I hate delays —  
I could not choose but rest awhile, —  
(These women have such ways !)

" On yonder mossy ledge she sat,  
50 Her sketch upon her knees,

26. The nearer Indian form is Moosil'auke.

32. See Hawthorne's story of *The Great Stone Face*.



A stray brown lock beneath her hat  
 Unrolling in the breeze ;  
 Her sweet face, in the sunset light  
 Upraised and glorified, —  
 55 I never saw a prettier sight  
 In all my mountain ride.

“As good as fair ; it seemed her joy  
 To comfort and to give ;  
 My poor, sick wife, and cripple boy,  
 60 Will bless her while they live !”  
 The tremor in the driver’s tone  
 His manhood did not shame :  
 “I dare say, sir, you may have known” —  
 He named a well-known name.

65 Then sank the pyramidal mounds,  
 The blue lake fled away ;  
 For mountain-scope a parlor’s bounds,  
 A lighted hearth for day !  
 From lonely years and weary miles  
 70 The shadows fell apart ;  
 Kind voices cheered, sweet human smiles  
 Shone warm into my heart.

We journeyed on ; but earth and sky  
 Had power to charm no more ;  
 75 Still dreamed my inward-turning eye  
 The dream of memory o’er.  
 Ah ! human kindness, human love, —  
 To few who seek denied ;  
 Too late we learn to prize above  
 80 The whole round world beside !

65. The measure requires the pronunciation pyramid'al, though the accent belongs on the second syllable.



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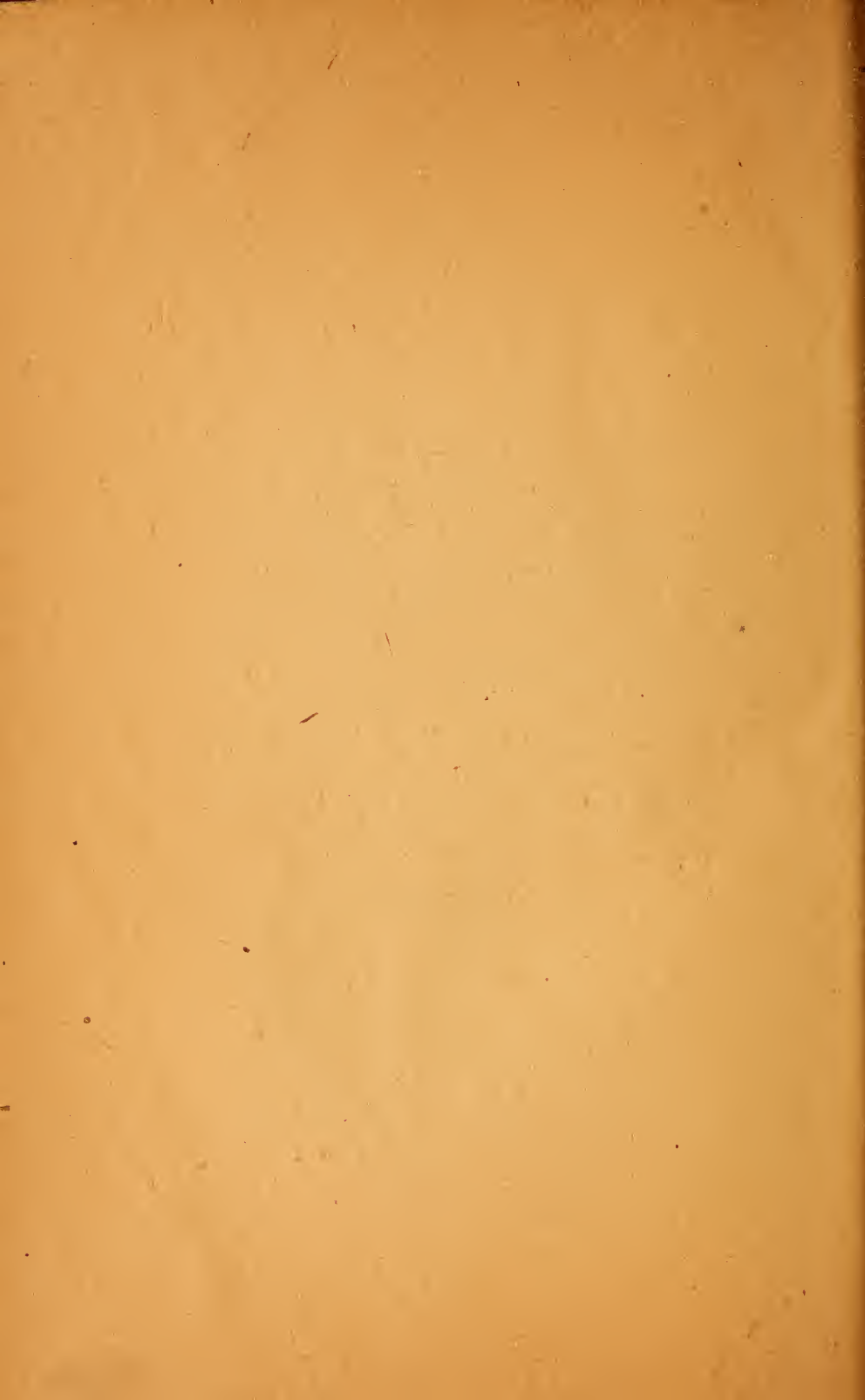
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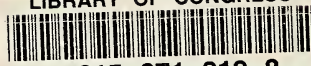
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